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Two-Faced Racism: Whites in the Backstage and Frontstage


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THE BACKSTAGE

Racial events that reveal the larger forces of racism in society are common and obvious in the sociospatial realm we term the backstage, especially in situations where whites interact with white friends and relatives. Backstage settings, where interactions typically take place among whites only, involve an array of complex interactions and performances. There we observe all dimensions of racial events-- indications of who is allowed and not allowed in the backstage, what racialized performances are tolerated or expected there, the sociospatial character of contexts, the impact of conventional racial framing, and the pervasive influence of the larger society. Here we go beyond the content of "what" happened to numerous other dimensions. Although we deem it important to provide descriptions of events, our goal is also to access how and where these interactions transpire, as well as various underlying features.

RACIAL EVENTS: SAFE BACKSTAGE SPACES

The backstage arena is generally viewed by a great many whites as a space that is safe from certain frontstage expectations about interpersonal politeness on racial matters. In the frontstage, most whites know that the expression of blatantly racist sentiments is generally inappropriate or frowned upon. In the protected backstage area where only whites are present, however, openly racist comments and jokes are not out of the ordinary. Indeed, they are usually tolerated if not encouraged—and sometimes are even expected. Whites generally assume that overtly racist comments will be protected in the backstage—that is, that white social actors therein will support or at least tolerate racial

performances. Recall that in Chapter 2 about the frontstage, we discuss numerous examples of whites interacting with and performing in the presence of people of color. In contrast, in the backstage, whites mostly perform for and support each other in the process of equally important racial events.

The Normalized Backstage

In their daily journals, many of our college students reported that racist performances, including racist speech actions, among whites in the backstage are expected, normal, and commonplace. The routinized backstage events can take place in a home setting, a car, a dorm room, a bar, or a restaurant. For example, a female student at one important southern university describes a racial event involving seven white students having dinner at a nice restaurant. She notes in her journal that they first discuss another white student, then she adds: "The other girl whispers across the table to me, 'He acts like a nigger.'" Similarly, a white male student describes asking a friend to grab a beer for him from the fridge in their apartment, and his white friend answers, "What do I look like, a nigger?" Many whites, including those who are college-educated, treat this extreme racist epithet as tame and normal, yet it has an oppressive and violent history and is arguably the harshest racist epithet still in everyday use in English.

In their journals, some students indicated that, once they paid attention to the matter, they were amazed at how frequently they heard racist epithets, comments, and interpretations of society among their white friends or relatives. One male student, Don, indicates that, "Today I heard the word nigger about 27 times in my house. I have never really paid much attention to how it gets tossed around and how offensive it can really be." Don, like most white students, recognizes that there are different expectations in the backstage, where it is often okay to say the word "nigger," compared with a frontstage area, where it is usually not permissible. Don notes that it is so common to hear the racist epithet that he has forgotten how negative its associations are. In his reflective journal, Don continues, "The reason that made me think of the amount of times this word was said is because my roommate's dad calls a few times weekly and tells us his newest jokes about blacks, Jews, and other ethnic groups." Here a white father continues to socialize younger whites in some essential bits of knowledge that are a critical part of the white racial framing of society. As we suggested in the preface, where we quoted from a white student who in the early 1990s made a similar comment about racist epithets and family members, most white college

students are part of social networks that support racist joking and racially stereotyped humor, and there are often multiple generations of family and close friends within these important networks.

Expressions of such racist sentiments occur in a great variety of backstage settings. Face-to-face interactions in small groups of whites involve not only verbal statements but also an array of nonverbal gestures and other bodily movements, as well as deep-background assumptions that contextualize the important verbal and nonverbal actions. Recalling driving along with his friends on a street named for Martin Luther King, Jr., one male student at a southern university offers this account of a racial event in a distinctive setting:

My friend who was driving proceeded to flick the sign off... . When I asked what that was for he said "I hate Martin Luther King Drives, they are always the absolute worst neighborhoods in whatever towns they are in." I nodded and replied "Yeah, that's kind of ironic I guess." He shook his head "Not really ironic, it's even worse during Martin Luther King Days. I remember I once went to a carnival with a friend of mine and his parents, and his mother hurried us out once it was over because she said it was 'their holiday.'" I gave him a funny look and said "That's a pretty racist thing to say." He nodded "Yeah, she's a bit of a racist." I suppose I was a bit surprised to hear that, after all generally such overt, irrational fear seems almost antiquated. (Joshua)

Being among white friends, the protagonist gives an active racial performance in which he expresses his view of black neighborhoods as "the absolute worst" with an obscene gesture, and then with added verbal commentary. He backs up his view of a black threat with a story about a friend's parent taking protective action overtly against black people. The latter story is suggestive of how racial stereotypes are passed along the white generations. Both accounts are triggered by the symbolism of Dr. King and signal negative black stereotypes on, or just below, the surface. Significantly, many whites seem to view Dr. King's birthday as the one holiday that is *not* their own. In contrast, a great many whites of all ethnic backgrounds now celebrate and embrace the Irish holiday, St. Patrick's Day.

Noteworthy here is the fact that the journal writer, in spite of evidence around him, considers overt and "irrational" racism to be "almost antiquated." Today, however, numerous stereotyped understandings long embedded in the dominant white framing of society routinely creep into the assessments, commentaries, and actions of a majority of white Americans.¹ Many whites do not yet view African Americans

as fully human equals. Scholar Jessica Benjamin has emphasized the significance of the interpersonal processes of human recognition and misrecognition. Racial discrimination and domination require a breakdown of the “recognition that allows self and other to meet as sovereign equals.”² The majority of white Americans seem to have difficulty in recognizing black people as people much like themselves. The repeated misrecognition of African Americans as dangerous or strange is linked to old mental blueprints that are part of the white-racist framing and thus helps to reproduce social patterns of white privilege.³

Incidents in a variety of sociospatial settings trigger strong racial commentaries by whites. For example, in this midwestern college setting, two white women jointly express some resentment toward nearby students:

My roommate and I (two 21-year-old white females) were just relaxing in our dorm room. We had our door open and two black females and two black males were on our floor coming to visit one of our neighbors. It was kind of late, around 1 am or so Anyway, they were very loud and obnoxious for at least twenty to thirty minutes. Needless to say, we shut our door and my roommate made a comment about how black kids are always so loud and inconsiderate. “They act as if they own the world and we owe them everything,” she said. Since I was tired and had to get up early for class I was frustrated too and began complaining and added to her racist comments. I don’t know [why] I did it, I guess all my experiences of late night disturbances involve black individuals. (Jessica)

Here a white roommate stereotypes black students—who here are noisy for a rather short period—as “always” loud and inconsiderate. The recorder herself admits to contributing to the ongoing racist complaints, which she rationalizes with a questionable generalization that “all” such late night loudness involves black students. Unless dormitories have changed dramatically since we were in college, this is not likely to have been the actual experience of either white student. Perhaps these women are much more sensitive to other students’ noise when the racial identity of the noisemakers is not their own. Significantly, the noise is not the only focus of their conversation, for the black students trigger a revealing stereotyped comment by the roommate about resentment over what she views as blacks’ inappropriate sense of entitlement.

Very strong racist performances appear again and again in our thousands of student journal entries. In this entry, Abby, a student at a southern university, describes watching television at a girlfriend’s apartment with friends:

Five of us (all white) were at the apartment when one of the guys came over and joined us. On the television was Arissa, one of the cast members of *Real World*. This guy says, "That was a good shit I just took." I then said, "Thanks for sharing that with us!" He then pointed out Arissa on the TV and said, "Well looking at her reminded me because she is black. She's black, my shit is black, she's a piece of shit." This guy is pretty weird and always said outrageous things. Everyone in the room is used to how he acts so no one gave him a response. The guy who said these things is white and has a fetish for girls of all other races. He always talks about wanting to have sex with them. (Abby)

In this commonplace setting for college students, a white man feels comfortable in announcing to a room full of white people that a black woman reminds him of a "piece of shit." The trigger to this extraordinarily offensive statement was simply seeing a black woman on television. He is not the first white person to make this wild connection between blacks and dirt or feces, for he is referencing an old white-racist notion that blacks are deserving of white subjugation because of alleged "subhuman" qualities.⁴ He may be making this obscene connection of blacks to human waste without consciously considering the meaning of his comment; everyday racist actions performed by whites are frequently done "normally" and without reflection.

The importance of the spatial dimension of the backstage is seen in all accounts in this chapter, as it is here in this private apartment setting. Whites' spatial isolation ensures that only those invited into the setting will be allowed to participate. Such extremely racist comments would probably not be made in the company of black people. Within such safe backstage settings, other whites are accustomed to men like these making outrageous racist assertions, and not one person there challenges his extreme comments. A key feature of the everyday racist behavior of whites is this tolerance of the most active white-racist protagonists by most whites, who often act as cheerleaders or passive bystanders. As here, the other whites' acquiescence in such racist performances is essential to their perpetuation over time and across the society.

The journal writer's final comment about the man's sexual desire for women of color is revealing. In spite of equating black women with human waste, he reportedly has a desire to be with "them" sexually. "Fetish" is typically defined as "an object of irrational reverence." The apparent contradiction of a white man desiring, perhaps in this case half-consciously, a sexual object that is also racially devalued is common in U.S. history and can be seen in old images constructed by white

men of black women as tantalizing “jungle bunnies” or “jezebels.” Historically, black women themselves have often been blamed for white men’s sexual attraction to them!⁵

Racist Joking Backstage

Typically, the backstage is a safe zone in which to perpetuate and perform the racist jokes and humorous commentary that seem essential to sustaining modern racism. Numerous students comment about the routine and recurring nature of racial joking and related activities. Recall our discussion in Chapter 2, where we emphasized that racist joking entails not only telling jokes but also important interaction among white individuals. Racial joking is preeminently social. In backstage situations, racist jokes are not a hidden secret pleasure, but part of having “fun” in a typically open and comfortable white atmosphere. Such joking serves several functions: it relieves stress and tension, unites a group, operates to “test the waters” of a topic, and serves to decrease individual accountability. Racial jokes provide an opportunity to say or do things that are racialized, inappropriate, and unkind. They allow white recounters to break social taboos and secure some pleasure from expressing normally repressed emotions and views. Under the guise of “just kidding around,” more racist jokes and barbed racist comments can be tossed around in the backstage arena than in the frontstage arena, in part because they are much less likely to generate a countering reaction. At least to the joketellers, the joking usually does not seem to have immediate social consequences.

As we noted previously, some researchers of joking play down the individual and societal significance of racist joking; they argue that whites who recount such jokes are frequently not really antagonistic toward those who are racially mocked.⁶ Yet, these analysts typically do not see that even racist jokes told by those who are not extreme bigots are shaped fundamentally by the conventional white framing—and thus help to communicate and perpetuate that old racial framing across groups, generations, and institutions. By telling racist jokes frequently, and by insisting that they are *only* jokes, whites promote their acceptability, persistence, and harmful impact on an already racist society.

Depicting such a backstage area, a midwestern student, Eileen, discusses how her white male friends relieve their boredom:

As I sit in a room with a bunch of frat guys, Phil walks in chanting “rotchie, rotchie, rotchie!!” I ask quietly what that term means and I am answered with a giggle and a quick “it’s slang for nigger, like niggerrotchie.” What makes me wonder most about these guys is

why they think it is funny to make racial jokes. The guys I hang around (white college males) constantly spend their "bored time" making up new ways to criticize each other, and the easiest way to do that is to call each other racial slurs when everyone is clearly white. I don't know what the pleasure is in calling people names that don't even make fun of them. If there happened to be people of a different color there in the room, they would never say anything like that. So why is it so easy to make slurs when they aren't there? I see that making racial slurs is only really "racial" when it is said to the person of the race. Otherwise, it is more of a term people use to define someone, where sometimes it has negative connotations. I just don't understand why people choose race as a means to make fun of other people. (Eileen)

In a provocative backstage performance, Phil teaches Eileen, and probably other whites, the white code language of "rotchie," shared slang here for "nigger." A stranger who intruded on this racial event might have questioned the intelligence or sanity of a white man who ritually chanted the word "nigger." However, this group of white men can relax in their secure backstage by replacing the harshest of racial epithets with a code term "rotchie" that has no apparent racial connotations unless one is educated about its hidden meaning. Note the intimate network, as only whites are invited into this particular backstage and only certain whites are taught the meaning of their code language. According to the writer's account, these white men routinely perform in their informal settings using racial slurs, apparently in this ritualized fashion.

Eileen suggests that "if there happened to be" people of color in the room, the men would *not* use their racist terms in the frontstage. Her language suggests that there do not "happen to be" people of color in this backstage often. As many journal writers indicate, for most white college students their common interactive settings do not involve people of color, and their most important social networks are typically all white.

For these white men, the racial slurs are unidirectional, for they are attacking only persons of color. Also, given the all-white setting, they rarely face negative consequences for their actions. Reflecting on this, Eileen notes her confusion about why white men make fun of people of color, yet still rationalizes the reality of friends' chanting a made-up racist term. For many whites, such terms are not viewed as slurs or as racist if they are not said *directly* to people of color. Yet, by giving performances with explicitly racist terminology frequently in their networks, they thereby reinforce negative images of people of color in the minds

of all those in hearing distance. Such ritualized performances are one way in which much white-racist thought and proclivity to discriminate are passed along in society. People of color are usually not invited into the white backstage, as they are not viewed as equals by such white fraternity men or their white friends. While there are numerous whites who make honest friendships across the color lines, they seem a small minority among the whites in the thousands of backstage accounts in these college journals.

Many whites, including those who are well educated, argue that white friends and family members do not mean, or generate, any harm in their frequent racist joking and other racial performances. For example, Debbie describes watching a movie with her four white roommates (two male, two female). In this mixed-gender setting, one man makes an aggressively racist joke:

When we heard the joke, my one roommate Lillian said she thought that joke was "terrible." My other roommate Mike said, "It's true though." We all yelled at him and said he was the worst, etc., etc. However, none of us was really mad or really offended by what he said and we probably should have been. Instances like this make me realize that people have gotten too used of people making jokes about minorities. We are too willing to accept people making inappropriate comments about minorities. I feel like I'm so used to people saying jokes like that, that I don't even take them seriously anymore. The strange thing is that I don't think any of my friends are actually racist, they just sometimes say inconsiderate things that they don't really mean. (Debbie)

Distinctive in this racial event is the report that no white person gets offended by the joke. Like numerous journal writers, Debbie notes how easy it is for whites to get accustomed to making or hearing disparaging comments by white protagonists—and, typically, to the point where the common joking performances are taken for granted. For many whites, making racist comments and gestures about people of color is no longer seen as offensive, or even as racist, when done in the safe backstage. Another female student, in the Midwest, similarly rationalizes her family members' frequently telling "black jokes" this way: "I know that they don't mean what they say. They were just joking around. I'd never really thought about it as anything more than simple jokes and fun because they are always laughing and having a good time with it." For the great many whites who are regularly involved in racial joking, such behavior is generally comfortable and commonly accepted. Most never have to acknowledge its offensiveness or question why making fun of people of

color is normalized in all-white sociospatial settings. Most whites tolerate, accept, or encourage the racist joking and bantering that is often part of their networking. Omnipresent racist joking and allied actions not only accent the white racial framing of society, but also are part of ritualized activities that reinvigorate that framing from one white generation to the next.

Whites make many types of stereotyped comments and racialized interpretations in private settings with trusted friends and relatives, as in this student's account of a racial event while television watching with a white friend:

Cheryl and I were watching the hit show *American Idol*, which is where the public votes for a singer who will be famous. Well, on that night's show, a Caucasian girl, Kelly Clarkson, won. And the TV cameras kept showing Kelly's family crying hysterically because she won. I also will mention that everyone there from her family was also Caucasian. Then an African American woman came over and gave Kelly's mother a huge hug. Cheryl said, "Who is that woman, their maid?" I said "WHAT?" And she said "I'm just kidding, it's just funny that everyone there is white and this black lady came out of nowhere like she's part of their family." It was disturbing to me that Cheryl felt that she couldn't have possibly been part of their family or even a friend of the family, she was automatically a maid. (Amanda)

For many white Americans, television-watching is routine and thus a likely setting for offering racial interpretations of society and reinforcing racially stereotyped images. Here a friend's commentary suggests that a black woman is more likely to be a servant than a friend of a white family. Lack of experience with African Americans seems to lead many whites to make uninformed judgments about who and what African Americans might be when they appear suddenly within their purview. Once again, the writer's reaction to the racial performance led to the performer accenting the "I'm just kidding" retort.

Family members, as we have seen previously, are important sources of racist joking and related actions. For example, this reflective journal writer, Beth, reports on going home to a southern city for spring break:

I went home to [names area] to visit my family for Spring Break. At dinner, my father ... kept making remarks about black people, saying things like, "I love ribs, maybe I have a little brotha in me! What do you think about that?" He made comments like this because he knows that it makes me angry and he thinks because

I am only twenty that I don't know anything about what black people are really like. I am having a hard time figuring out what to say to him when he makes these horrible comments and I am planning on going home [back to the university] sooner than I thought I would because of this. (Beth)

This poignant journal entry describes a racial event with several dimensions, including a joking racial performance by a parent, replete with caricaturing and stereotyping of African Americans. This white father polices carefully the borders of "us" versus "them." We also observe the trigger for comments about racial matters that certain foods can provide, foods many whites associate with black Americans.⁷ Clearly, this student struggles with her father's racist performances and interpretations, and the account suggests that she, like many dissenting whites, does not know how to confront him effectively. Beth may resist confronting her father, as parents represent authority figures that children are socialized to respect and obey. Moreover, as with most of the student accounts, this excerpt leaves us with unanswered questions about certain relational, spatial, temporal, and emotional dimensions of these whites' thinking and feeling about racial matters. If we were interviewing this woman, we might ask her questions like, "When and where does your father make these pointed remarks to you?" and "Besides anger, how does it make you feel when he says these things?"

"Nice" Whites: Who Can Be Racist?

For many whites, including many of the journal writers, the whites who make blatantly racist comments against persons of color, in backstage or frontstage settings, are not necessarily "racist" individuals. Indeed, these white protagonists are commonly exculpated as just people who sometimes say inconsiderate things that are of little social consequence. Making negative racial comments is thus viewed as a modest appendage to the habits of an otherwise healthy and "good" or "nice" white person. This claim resonates with other claims that whites make about a white person's character and lack of racism. As noted in Chapter 2, many whites claim that a white person who is usually polite to a person of color therefore cannot be "a racist." Such a view makes sense to these rather defensive whites, given that in their networks the term "racist" is often reserved for extremists like Ku Klux Klan members. Not surprisingly, the journal accounts also show that, beyond the ivory towers of academia, there is little serious discourse among whites regarding the severity and institutional nature of racial discrimination and other elements of U.S. racism.

One female student in the Midwest describes going with two other whites to a haunted house trail at Halloween:

I rode in the car with my best friend Abby and her new boyfriend Todd. It takes a little over an hour to get to ... the Haunted Trail ... so Todd decided to put in a little music. I'm not really sure what types of bands played this but it wasn't real music. They were songs about black people and they were very harsh and very gross. The lyrics said things about hanging, and they were good for nothing, and shooting, and such. Todd thought it was hilarious; he loved it!! Abby and I were disgusted, I couldn't believe that he actually liked this, and that people would actually seriously say these things. We finally asked him to turn it off and to play the radio. He turned the radio on but he seemed rather reluctant, it seems that he was enjoying what we had been listening to. We asked him if he was racist and he said, "Hell yeah!" I don't remember exactly what he said now but he talked about how he thought that black people were only good for the sports they played in, how he hated the fact that they all smoked and pretended to be cool. I was surprised that Abby would date someone like this, because we have a few black friends from her school. I know that he wouldn't have said that around just anyone, cuz he would probably get his ass kicked. Other than these comments and his bad choice of music he seemed like a fun guy to hang out with. (Courtney)

Note here that are three white actors—a central performer and two mild dissenters. They are acting out this little drama in a relaxed backstage setting. A young man thinks white supremacist music is entertaining, while the white women are the ones who “finally” ask him to change the aggressive music. Here again we observe the gendered component of interaction on racial matters that is commonplace in the backstage—that is, white women frequently do some social “policing” of the racist activities of white men.

The references to extremely racist music are revealing, for such anti-black songs (including lyrics about lynching blacks) and racist music groups provide part of a social support system that celebrates, reaffirms, and reinforces important aspects of white understandings of racial matters in this society. Within the powerful music industry some white elites foster or allow certain music organizations to perpetuate this white supremacist music.

Yet again, this narrative raises the question of what sort of person do most whites—even those uncomfortable with blatantly racist performances—consider to be a seriously racist individual. Remarkably, this

self-defined "racist" man is nonetheless seen by the reporting student as a "fun guy to hang out with," a guy who happens to have a racist appendage of little lasting significance. Note too that the journal writer is surprised that her friend would date such an openly racist person, given that both white women have black friends. Certain aspects of much white thinking about racial matters are clear: those with black friends cannot really be racist, and racist remarks and interests such as those expressed here are not serious—or, indeed, are not central to white personalities.

Quite often in the journal accounts of the white backstage these young adults defend those whites who make racist comments as "nice guys" or "nice people." Recounting a trip to get her paycheck at her workplace, Ashley, a female student at a southeastern university, notes a joking performance by a white co-worker:

Robby was there telling a joke. He just finished and I asked him to start over. He glanced to see if anyone was around. He starts, "A black man, a Latin man, and a white guy find a magical lamp on a beach. A genie pops out and grants each one wish. The black guy wishes that all his people were in their native culture and happy. The genie grants the wish. The Latin guy thinks that that is a great idea and wishes for the same. The genie grants it. The genie asks the white guy what he wants. The white guy remarks well if the Latins and the blacks are in their own countries and not in America, I guess I'll have a coke!" I thought it was pretty funny and I wasn't the only one. But, I'm glad he waited till no one was around to tell it. If you didn't know Robby you might misunderstand. (Ashley)

The last line suggests that in Ashley's mind Robby is not really racist, but rather a funny and nice guy. This account illustrates a backstage performance; before retelling the racist joke, Robby looks around to ensure a secure backstage, and at the end of Ashley's account she comments on how good it was that "no one" (presumably of color) was around to hear it. We observe her racial insensitivity and lack of understanding, as well as that of other whites who were present. Once again, aspects of a white-racist framing of society are presented with the decoying veneer of a humorous presentation. This "pretty funny" joke is full of deeply racist notions, including the view that the U.S. is ideally white and thus not really the "home country" of black and Latino Americans. White ethnocentrism and ignorance of North American history are suggested here, too. The average black American has ancestry going back more centuries into North American history than the average white

American. In addition, much of the western United States was once taken in an imperialist war that U.S. politicians directed against Mexico; most Mexican Americans (Latinos), and many other Americans, currently live on lands that were once part of the country of Mexico.⁸

Is the commonplace racist humor performed backstage considered to be serious racism by most whites? Interestingly, Sam, a college student in the Midwest, discusses what is considered “real” racism among certain whites:

On Sunday night I had a discussion with Frank, a white college male, about racism in our building. I asked him if he felt like there was any in the hall and he told me that he hadn't observed any “real” racism in the building. I asked him what he meant by “real” racism and he replied that while he had heard racist jokes, he didn't see any “Klansmen or burning crosses” so he didn't take it to be a serious problem. I asked him why he didn't consider racist jokes to be as serious a problem as racial violence. He said that as long as nobody was directly being hurt, either by words or by more physical means, then it shouldn't be considered real racism.

In a move that is rare in our journals, Sam then tries to convince his friend that telling racist jokes contributes to an environment that supports a racist hierarchy and racial discrimination. But Frank is skeptical:

He told me that he wasn't quite sure if what I said was completely true or not, but regardless he promised to make an effort to cut back on the racist jokes and comments that he was prone to, if not because what I claimed was true, then only because I was asking him to do so as a friend. (Sam)

In this safe backstage conversation, a concerned white student confronts his friend with the idea that racism is more than open racial violence. Frank, like many whites, does not consider such racialized joking, especially backstage, to be “real racism.” Because whites are generally dominant in most areas of U.S. society, they have the privilege of claiming that racist joking is unrelated to the society's fundamental racial hierarchy. Telling racist jokes in the company of other whites is not harmful because no one appears to them to be hurt and such commentary is dismissed as “just kidding.” Ordinarily, for the white performers, no negative consequences appear to accrue from such backstage performances. (We examine a few exceptions in Chapter 4.) From this white perspective, apparently, the only harm comes if the wrong person, a person of color, stumbles into the backstage. Indeed, racist joking operates to ensure that people of color are unwelcome backstage.

Indicating that he is an active protagonist in telling jokes, Frank does not promise to stop but only to make “an effort to cut back.” The “prone to” language reveals how widespread this type of racial event is in the backstage. Note, too, the social component here, for whites do not tell or listen to such jokes alone. Evident too is how hard it is for whites to understand that telling racist jokes in the privacy of one’s group nonetheless perpetuates whites’ racist thinking and inclinations—and thus racial discrimination and the racial hierarchy where whites are at the top.

Spending some time at home with her family, Kelsey, a college student in the Midwest, describes a substantial event in her home setting when a jovial boyfriend shows up:

Around midnight my brother, sister, and I were all sitting around watching a movie when my sister’s boyfriend shows up drunk. After the movie ended Gavin (the boyfriend) wanted to watch TV, and while he was flipping through the channels he stopped at BET. He said, “Now ain’t that some shit. BET, we couldn’t have WET cuz that just wouldn’t be politically correct! But they can have a BET.” The way Gavin talks is funny and we are all laughing at this point. I think this, and the fact that he was a rambling drunk, spurred him to continue his conversation about how he felt about blacks and Mexicans. “The blacks think we owe them for what happened years ago; I never had a damn slave, I don’t owe them shit.” He continued his conversation about how he didn’t like their attitude. “Now there’s a difference between a black and a nigger. I have some black friends and they’re cool, but I don’t like damn niggers. It’s their attitude, they think they are the shit ... but they’re not as bad as the Mexicans, damn border jumpers. They come up here, can’t speak a lick of English and take all our damn jobs cuz they will work for cheap. I wouldn’t let them build my house! Now they expect us to learn Spanish as a second language cuz we have so many damn Mexicans in America. Fuck that. I ain’t learning their language.” ... Every time we laughed he would say, “I’m serious” and then he would laugh too. At the end of this big speech he stated that he wasn’t racist, and my sister said, “yes you are” and then he said maybe a little. I think it was funny because he was so drunk. I was, we all were definitely amused by this. I don’t know if he would have spoken like this in public, although he said he didn’t care who found out or where he was. I hope that he was just a rambling drunk and that he didn’t mean everything he said, although I’m sure he meant some of it. I disagreed, as did my brother and sister, with much of what he had to say; but he still made me laugh. (Kelsey)

This drama takes place in an intimate home space. Similar to Ashley's narrative earlier in the chapter, Kelsey here suggests that this conversation took place in an all-white backstage setting, and probably would not have taken place in a "public" frontstage in the presence of people of color.

Even given the strong racist commentary by the central performer, the other whites do not intervene. Indeed, they actively laugh along with, and at, the perpetrator's unoriginal and stereotyped ravings, all of which are linked to the common white-racist framing. Performers like Gavin often attack multiple groups of color, but seem to prefer African Americans and Latinos. As we noted in Chapter 2, alcohol is again cited by a white commentator as a mitigating factor, one that is viewed as normally reducing constraints on overtly racist behavior. Note too the rationalizing, the view of the central white protagonist as hopefully not meaning at least some of what he said. The tone and text of the writer's account suggest that Gavin is a funny fellow these whites generally enjoy having around.

The white-racial framing of society generally incorporates counters to black challenges to white domination, such as Gavin's rejection of black slavery as being relevant to the present day. In all regions of the United States, whites frequently assert that they or their ancestors never enslaved African Americans or announce, incorrectly in fact, that "slavery happened hundreds of years ago." Whites often like to lecture others in this regard, as in this comment from a female student at a western college: "I was on the phone with a friend who was watching TV and saw a commercial honoring Black History Month. She groaned and said, 'I'm so sick of this, slavery was a long time ago, get over it!'"

On occasion, the student journal writers seem surprised about who among their friends actually engages in overtly racist commentary or action. In particular, many seem surprised when white women are central protagonists in racist events in the backstage or the frontstage. Here a male student reacts to his girlfriend, also a college student, and creates a distinctive racial event:

She was working on a computer project that was due Friday. Today is Wednesday and she was really stumped in her work ... and she then got really frustrated and repeated a racial slur more than once. My girlfriend is very country oriented and likes to do outdoor activities, but she went to school with a whole bunch of black people. I was pretty surprised to hear this out of such a cute little innocent girl. I told her that I couldn't believe that she said that. It really doesn't offend me when I hear a racial slur, but I think that's

just because of how I was brought up. So I then proceeded [to] ask her why she said those slurs. She told me the reason she said those things was because it made her feel better. I didn't quiz her any more about why she made a racial slur but in a way it kind of made sense to me. I mean we are all supposed to follow certain norms and when you rebel against these norms and knowing that you're not going to get in trouble just kind of makes a person feel better. I think it is a weird outlook on anger management but she said it was a way to relieve stress and to feel better. (Jack)

The spatial location, a private dorm room, contributes to the safety of the racial performance. The girlfriend does not self-censor her racist slurs, but repeats them. Jack signals the difference between frontstage and backstage in his reference to "following certain norms" in the frontstage—that is, the norm against yelling the racist slurs well known to most whites. In the safe backstage area, whites can "rebel" against these frontstage norms without serious consequence. Note too that the girlfriend is viewed as a good person who happens to use racial slurs—in this case, interestingly, to relieve her personal stress. Thus, part of white privilege and insensitivity includes not recognizing the damage done by racist slurs, both in reinforcing the conventional racial framing in white heads and in desensitizing whites to racism's many costs. Of course, the damage for whites, while significant, is modest when compared with the physical, emotional, social, and psychological costs of racism for black Americans and other people of color.⁹

The rather sexist language of "cute little innocent [white] girl" suggests some surprise on Jack's part, for his girlfriend does not fit the stereotypical Archie Bunker image of a working-class white man who repeatedly makes strong racist commentaries. Indeed, when they have been depicted in fictional media programs, which today is seldom, aggressive white bigots have often been portrayed as working class and uneducated. Jack describes his girlfriend as country-oriented, thereby suggesting that she is somewhat like Archie Bunker. But he then qualifies his statement by describing her as going to school with black students, thereby hinting that such a white person would be unlikely to think or act in such racist ways.

Distinguishing among White Performers

In some of the interactions in private arenas, the college students and their friends or relatives distinguish between different kinds of whites. For example, Alyssa, from a southern university, provides this intriguing narrative about going to a party back home at her boyfriend's house:

I was sitting next to one of his friends on the tailgate of his truck, and we were talking about the definition of a redneck. All of the guys at the party decided that they weren't rednecks, they were southern boys. So when I asked what the definition of a redneck would be, I was told that a redneck was an "ignorant asshole who hates black people and is rude to women." My friend also told me that he had to revise his definition because he used to add that rednecks lived in trailers, but since my boyfriend lived in a trailer, he couldn't put that in his definition anymore. I thought it was funny that he would generalize that everyone that lived in a trailer was a racist redneck who beats up his wife, until he met someone that actually did live in a trailer. (Alyssa)

Note the social class stereotyping in this team performance in a private setting. For many whites, especially middle class whites, one way to put down working class whites is to call them "rednecks" and to make jokes about their behavior. These white men make a distinction between "rednecks" and "southern boys," the latter a category they accept for themselves. Here "redneck" is a codeword for an openly, even proudly, racist and sexist white man, most typically a person of working class background.¹⁰

By defining extremely racist people as working class or rednecks, some whites, especially those in the middle class, try to distance themselves from such people and may thereby hope to excuse their own racist commentaries as somehow "not racist." In numerous accounts in the diaries, whites who make strongly racist comments are characterized in terms of these social class stereotypes. For example, Ryan notes how he views his uncle and his family and friends, who live in a rural area in the South:

I went out to my uncle's house [where] he has about 30 acres all to himself. They are a bunch of rednecks that live out in the woods. While I was there the mailman came out to his house to deliver the mail. The mailman was a black male. Once he left my uncle said that was the first time he ever had a nigger on his property before and said he hoped it would be the last time to. Most of the people there kind of laughed and said they hoped so to. (Ryan)

Even a black person who is a U.S. government employee performing an essential service is not welcome on this man's property. Note too that his bluntly racist commentary is supported by white cheerleaders who laugh and join in the racist remarks in what is a safe backstage setting. Ryan seems to excuse the actions as those of working class "rednecks."

Another example of the use of "redneck" for a racist white person can be seen in Brittany's account of driving to her father's house with a sister and her boyfriend:

My sister's boyfriend, who is 30, was driving the car, when he was cut off by a minivan. Being that he is the type of person who is easily aggravated, he eventually pulled up next to the minivan. The person driving was an Asian woman. His way of expressing this was by saying "damn gook." My sister totally flipped on him, which I wasn't expecting. She totally berated him and started calling him a redneck, and telling him that he was being extremely ignorant. I agreed with her that yes, it was ignorant and obnoxious, but her delivery I thought was counter-productive. But at the same time, it made me question whether I should be more confrontational when people say things like that. My usual policy is to not say anything, believing that I can't change a person's views with a sentence or two. I guess the situation was weird, because he obviously thought he was in company that wouldn't criticize the things he said, but then my sister took a major offense to his words. (Brittany)

Here Brittany's sister speaks out against a racist performance involving a derogatory epithet that is part of a common white framing of Asian Americans. Evidently, the sister equates such overtly racist reactions with "redneck" whites. We note at the end of the account here a common student response to the racial performances recorded in the journals. After hearing a racist comment from a white friend, acquaintance, or relative, they often think something like, "Oh well, I can't change his mind, so I won't even try."

Discussing racial commentaries made at the place she shares with her boyfriend Cliff, another female student, similarly portrays some of her friends and acquaintances as "redneck boys":

Around 5:30 some of Cliff's friends, my brother, his wife, and their son came over. All of the guys stayed home and watched the game. My sister-in-law and I took my nephew and nieces to a Halloween party We came home around 10:00. After everyone one left Cliff was telling me some of the things my brother had said that night. One of the things he said my brother said was that when he was in high school he was in the KKK, and they used to beat up blacks (he said niggers) and take them behind the lake and leave them. I know they had been drinking, and my brother had had a few too many, so I didn't believe him. I told Cliff that

my brother was in a club in high school called the KKK, but it supposedly stood for the Kountry Kitchen Kookers. It was a real club at the high school, they had a float in the homecoming parade and cooked hamburgers on the float. I told Cliff that my brother probably just made up that stuff about beating blacks up. He probably thought it sounded good at the time and he knew he'd get a reaction out of the rest of them All of the redneck boys talk big around here, but most of the talk is just lies. (Michelle)

Once again, we see the normality of racist performances in backstage arenas. Michelle's brother was part of a southern high school club that apparently worked hard to get the acronym KKK and that also put much time and effort into this club, including participation in a homecoming parade. Not only have these white students shown a major lack of sensitivity to the pain they have caused black Americans in their area, at least one of them more recently has claimed to have beaten up "niggers" in his high school days. Yet, in Michelle's view these "redneck boys" like to exaggerate, especially when drinking and likely as part of a hegemonic masculinity and male bonding ritual.¹¹

White Strangers: Unexpected Persons

White strangers periodically appear in these white backstage areas. The common role of white strangers in reinforcing or facilitating racist performances signals that the backstage is not necessarily defined by intimacy and personal closeness, but indeed by skin color. What permits access into these omnipresent private settings? Ordinarily, white skin color alone will grant a person safe passage into the racialized backstage area. (For exceptions to this general rule, see Chapter 5.)

In this next example Sheila, a student at a southern college, notes how a white man immediately includes her in a backstage conversation:

My friend Gary needed a ride to his friend Tony's apartment, so I went with him. When we walked in, one of his roommates, named Fred, started talking to Gary. Fred was holding some sort of crowd control device, like a metal baton because he works in a club as a bouncer and just felt like carrying it around. The sight of it prompted Gary to ask him about working in the club. He asked if he ever had to stay after and clean up, to which Fred replied "I don't do the nig jobs." As a person who was meeting him for the first time, I felt a little awkward that he would just say something like that. But I guess since I was another white person, he figured I wouldn't care. The strangest part of it to me was that he said it

very casually, like he talks like that all the time. First impressions are important to me, and it's not that I expect people to always be politically correct, but hearing such a blatant derogatory remark made me a little uncomfortable. (Sheila)

Commenting on this racial event, Sheila notes that she was surprised that this white man made a racially derogatory remark casually in front of her. He could have simply said "no" when asked the question, but instead invokes a racist term that is shorthand for "nigger jobs." Sheila's white skin gives her a racial passport into a deep backstage conversation, where it is assumed she will agree or, at the very least, not challenge his assertion. At least three whites are present for this conversation, but reportedly no one questions Fred's racist language. Even the writer notes that she is only a "little uncomfortable," once again signaling the normalcy and lack of major significance in such performances for most whites.

Another female student describes a racial event in a bar where all the whites were assumed to be safe for a racist performance by the owner:

One of my close friends works at the [names bar] as a bartender. One night I was sitting at the bar talking to my friend, and the new owner came in and took a seat at the bar. He started talking to my friend about how he did not like the fact the [bar] next door has been targeting a mostly black and Hispanic clientele for Thursday nights. He also mentioned that this was one of the reasons he recently hired "redneck" door staff and instructed them to keep an eye out for problems that any of the minorities may be causing. My friend and I held our opinions to ourselves, me because I did not know him very well, and she because of her job security. We talked about what he said after he left and we were both surprised that a professional business owner would express his racist thoughts to, not only to his employees, but also to his customers. (Rachel)

Once again, certain whites are typed as "rednecks," this time by a new owner who charges them with policing people of color from the next-door bar. In numerous student commentaries, we see how whites often group certain people of color together as racially targeted groups. This recurring grouping suggests which people of color get the most attention in white racial framing these days, as well as the growing demographic presence of Latinos in the last decade or two. Here, we note a backstage where whiteness is a passport into the conversation. The owner assumes that whites who hear his story will agree with him, or at least not confront him, which is the case for these women who adopt the role of pas-

sive bystanders. For many whites in the backstage, even among strangers, using racial images or racist terminology is customary. Similar to Sheila's previous comment, a little later in her journal, Rachel comments that she does not expect "politically correct" language from white men like this owner—which suggests that for her the racial comment itself is not problematic, but only the social context (a first meeting) in which it was said. She also does not question his discriminatory actions.

Numerous students comment about white strangers who have assumed that making racist comments should be accepted, at least in backstage areas. In this report of a recent racial event in a southern city, a white waiter tries to get cozy with a group of women:

I was sitting at [the bar] with 3 other Caucasian females in their early twenties on a Saturday night the waiter sat down to join us for a cigarette. He was a white male in his late twenties. He wore a work uniform and had an eyebrow ring. After normal introductory conversation he leaned in after noticing one of the black girls walking across the street. He began in a lower voice than he was using previously, "I'm not racist or nothing" *Me and my friend glared at each other uncomfortable while my other more drunken friend leans in to hear what he has to say, "but I know some damn good jokes about black people."* My drunken friend laughs and eggs him on to share the jokes. He continues to tell the joke, which has a punch line involving black people and watermelons. It was not particularly funny, and made a stereotype of all black people liking watermelon. I honestly didn't get the joke and asked him light heartedly to stop before he told another one. The mood of the group became uncomfortable. I believe that I didn't allow myself to take a harder tone because he was giving us free beer. He shied away from the conversation and refilled our beers, returning to talk to us about other topics. (Jillian)

Observing a black person across the street triggers the white protagonist to telling racist jokes. The waiter recognizes the inappropriateness of racial joking as he provides the conventional white disclaimer of "I'm not racist" in a lowered voice, which is assumed to provide him with permission to perform with a clear conscience. The racist watermelon joke was probably not invented by the waiter. Indeed, there is a repertoire of such watermelon jokes associated with the conventional white-racist framing of black Americans.

Here, advantages come from going along with the racist joking, for the acquiescence provides an environment of bonding, racial unity, and free beer. Yet two women are uncomfortable. It only took one woman to encourage the man. Alcohol is again used to excuse her from account-

ability. This complex interaction illustrates the difficulty in going against other whites and calling out a person for his or her negative actions. In the all-white backstage, the white protagonists and their acolytes typically expect that racist humor and related comments will not be challenged. Whites like this writer frequently report how troubling it is to confront white friends, family members, and strangers. The latter commonly expect that the backstage will be a space safe from certain frontstage expectations about racist commentaries and similar actions.

The social bond of whiteness is remarkably powerful in this society. Even a passing white stranger may feel enough of a bond with another white person to inaugurate a racist conversation. While at a pleasant park in her city, this student at a northern university observes an interesting racial event:

My friend, a 20 year old white female, walked down to dip her feet in the lake before heading out. A man with his family was down by the shore, and stopped my friend to ask her about school — he had apparently graduated a couple years prior. This man was probably in his late twenties, he was white, and he had a little boy with him—presumably his son. My friend came back to our group ... obviously a little upset over the conversation with this man. He had asked her if diversity at school had gotten any better since his graduation, and my friend answered that while it was still pretty low, the school was making a conscientious effort to get more of a minority representation. He responded with something along the lines of “Well that’s good, because it’s just a bubble there. You don’t realize that when you get out into the real world, well, you actually have to lock your doors at night.” This man was ... making an obviously racial comment—saying that minorities are the reason that there is crime in the world. My friend doesn’t think he even realized what he was saying, and I couldn’t help but be upset by the fact that his little boy was going to be raised with that kind of derogatory mindset. (Megan)

Here, a total stranger disrupts an outing with his assertive older-white-male performance that insists to a younger white person that the “bubble” of the college setting is not the “real world,” with that world’s supposed dangers created by people of color. Significantly, at least two of the white women realized some of the significance of the racial group stereotyping and its impact on white youth.

GROUP DYNAMICS IN THE BACKSTAGE

In the backstage arenas, social networking varies in terms of who is involved and who is actively excluded. The racial stereotypes, notions, emotions, and inclinations that are central to the white racial framing of society are not only learned and communicated within intimate social groups, but they also provide some of the critical communicative threads that bind all-white groups together. Recall that researcher Nina Eliasoph found racist discourse to often be critical in binding a white community group together.¹² In networks, whites also pass along an array of sincere fictions not only about the racial others but also about how whites are the superior racial group. As we have previously demonstrated, social networks of friends and relatives sustain and encourage racist performances and pressure members to think and act in line with the conventional racial framing, including its group stereotypes and allied racist interpretations. Ongoing interactions in, and the pressures of, these important friendship and family networks encourage individual members to use, reuse, and elaborate bits and pieces of whites' collective racial knowledge, over long periods of time and across large areas of geographical space.¹³ We note in our data a reciprocal phenomenon in which networks are formed by shared ideas, inclinations, and performances—which are in their turn perpetuated by the same networks.

Numerous journal narratives reveal the networking character of the moments when many racist actions in the backstage are likely to be performed. Thus, Molly, a perceptive journal writer, describes a conversation she had with her white boyfriend about racial performances in his workplace:

Andy works for a construction company, where most of the men are in their thirties or forties. They all are southern boys, or what other people would call "rednecks" or "hicks." He told me about some of the jokes they like to tell, which insult women and black people. I asked him if he laughed and he said "of course I did, they were funny jokes." I thought this was bizarre because my boyfriend isn't racist in the least, although he is also of southern upbringing; yet he can laugh at jokes with racial or sexist content. When I asked him if he thought it was OK to make fun of black people or belittle women, he smartly answered no in fear of me ripping into him. What was most interesting to me is that I know he would never listen to or tell jokes like that unless he was in front of this particular group of friends. This proved to me how

people can change their feelings and attitudes depending on what group they are hanging out with. (Molly)

Although, like many whites, Molly suggests that her boyfriend is not racist, he does at least provide cheerleading support for racist and sexist performances within the group settings he deems important. Gloria Yamato has noted the importance of white awareness or lack of awareness in doing racism on a routine basis in various settings.¹⁴ We observe here how whites like the boyfriend can change behaviors to fit contexts that shift in the degree of openly expressed racism. In this narrative Molly depicts the construction workers as southern "rednecks," an insinuation that they are the type of whites who are especially likely to tell racist jokes. She cites Andy's southern upbringing without criticism, to explain his responses to, and apparent participation in, this backstage humor. As the reader can tell from the student accounts, however, racist performances and supportive cheerleading are not limited to the South. Once again, a white observer excuses the racist actions of other whites.

Within backstage contexts, most whites have a shared understanding as to what is appropriate in regard to violating social taboos by means of joking. Although Andy claims the barbed jokes are just "funny," he clearly shares the common white-male understanding that women and black people are more or less appropriate targets for such attacks. As a rule, such humorous comments are not randomly made by isolated white individuals, but rather are socially derived and based on a common racial vocabulary and socially inherited framing of racial matters. This common foundation explains why translating such jokes across different languages and cultures is often impossible. For example, a joke with the punch line referencing African Americans eating watermelon—two subjects that appear to have nothing in common—would not make sense unless it resonates within a historical racist framing.

Of course, not all group settings involving whites give rise to significant racial events. For example, Melissa, a student at a southern university, who had noted numerous racist comments from previous gatherings of her white friends, later adds a journal entry about one evening when she went out with four male and three female friends:

I didn't hear any racial or ethnic comments the entire evening which was a little surprising to me. This was the group that has made most of the comments I have recorded in my journal thus far, and they didn't say anything tonight. The most ironic part of it is that this was the first night that we didn't have anyone of another ethnicity along with us. It seems to me that it would be the other way, as in that they would make ethnic/racial comments

when only white people were around so they wouldn't offend anyone, and they would hesitate to say things that might offend people when they were along with us. (Melissa)

Surprised that no derogatory racial or ethnic comments were made by numerous friends this particular evening, Melissa reflects on how her group's racial dynamics shift depending on its composition. She suggests that racist comments by these particular white friends are more likely to be articulated in frontstage settings where there is someone present who is not white, in contrast to the other students who report more racist actions in backstage settings. Such an assessment suggests that there is some group and contextual variability in white groups' interactions and contextualized presentations in regard to racial matters.

INTERPERSONAL CONFRONTATION IN THE BACKSTAGE

White Discomfort in the Backstage

On occasion, as we have already seen, some whites will bring certain frontstage expectations about limiting or rejecting overtly racist comments and actions into the more private backstage arenas. In this section we provide more detailed examples of whites who confront other whites over racial matters in the backstage. Numerous journal writers describe moments when this frontstage expectation creeps or surges into the backstage. They sometimes report that they, or other whites, have held friends accountable for racist comments made in safe backstage areas. However, more common are whites reporting acquiescence in racist entertainment even though they knew it was wrong. In yet other cases, the whites at issue report feeling guilty but not knowing how to confront friends or having fear of the social consequences.

In her journal, Tonya describes some racial events during a long weekend with thirteen white friends:

For the rest of the weekend, two or three people kept using the word nigger whenever we would mention a black person. I know they wouldn't dare say it in public, but I thought saying it in the apartment was just as bad. Whenever someone said it, I tried to ignore it, but then I decided to say something. I casually told them, "Geeze, guys, do ya have to use that word?" At the time I didn't want to put a damper on the situation. I later realized I should've been firmer when I said it because they'll probably keep saying it in the future. (Tonya)

Tonya illustrates the frontstage and backstage distinction in whites' racial interactions, as she claims that her white friends "wouldn't dare" say the racist epithet except in a secure backstage setting. At first, Tonya tries to ignore the harsh racist epithet so as not to interrupt the fun, but then she weakly intervenes with a "geeze" phrasing. However, reflecting later on the ongoing racial performances, she realizes that she should have pressed her friends harder to stop using the racist term. The student diarists frequently made comments that they wished they had confronted racist comments and actions more forcefully in interactions with friends and relatives. Interestingly, rarely do they report confronting a racist comment by friends or relatives that they wish they had *not* confronted, a point we will discuss further in Chapter 5.

In this next example, Andrea describes her modest reaction to a racist event at a rather friendly party of white students:

We all sat down to have a couple beers and play some drinking games. In the particular one we played, there is a part where someone will pick a certain card and when they do, that means they select a category for the group to describe, for example types of cars, cereals, etc. My girlfriend Holly chose a "category card" and for her category she laughed and said, "slang words for black people." I was completely disgusted, and the worst part is that everyone else (a small group of white kids) just laughed and went along with it. Well, it wasn't funny, and when it came my turn I said I didn't have one, and that's when the category ends. It is just so frustrating because I know my friends mean well, and we all have African American friends, but they still think it's okay to say such things; I thought she really crossed a line. (Andrea)

By refusing to perpetuate the racist fun, Andrea stops the game. Frustrated at the racist performances by friends using images and language from the dominant racial framing, she is disturbed that others see no harm in these assertively racist speech-actions. Yet she does not openly confront her friends, but instead utilizes a passive-aggressive approach of ending the racist interaction without confrontation. Once again, the writer excuses whites doing racist performances as well-meaning and as supposedly having black "friends." Interestingly, researchers have found that, when questioned in detail, most whites claiming black friends do not actually list them in their lists of good friends.¹⁵ For many whites, having even casual black acquaintances, such as in their workplace, seems to give them permission to make certain racist commentaries backstage with a clear conscience.

More Active Confrontation in the Backstage

White confrontation of racist actions in the backstage varies greatly, from the more common subtle and modest reactions to the less common aggressive interruptions of racist commentaries and other actions. Occasionally in the journal accounts we glimpse acts of open confrontation with white protagonists who are speaking out in overtly racist terms, as in this report from a white male student at a northern college:

This weekend one of my good friends Brian hooked up with a black girl. He is white. Some of our other friends made a few not too offensive jokes about jungle fever and such but mostly no one had a problem with it. She was an attractive girl that is very nice. Most everybody was very supportive and thought that she was nice.

There was one guy that was around, Matt, who was giving him a hard time about it. Brian, Matt, a few others and I were sitting around fighting off hangovers when Matt started coming up with racial comments about the girl Not one of the rest of us put up with any of it. Right from the start Brian and I shut him up and would not let him talk about it We ended up not putting up with it and kicking him out of the room. I was proud that all of us would not put up with such comments, and together we could stand up to it. I have discovered that the strength is in numbers. If I was alone and a few people were making racist comments I probably would not speak out but if I have support with me then I feel I can do the right thing. (Chris)

Here the level and intensity of racist commentary in a backstage setting are critical to the trajectory of the evening. Some "not too offensive jokes about jungle fever" are considered to be *acceptable* as racist performances. Yet, when one man makes more intense and continuing negative comments about the black woman, the white group decides to rein him in with counter commentary, and then exclusion. Chris makes an insightful comment on the protests against Matt being conditional on group support. Unmistakably, white groups are critical not just in generating and supporting racist behavior but also in countering that behavior. Generally speaking, ending racist performances on a larger societal scale likely will require much white-group support of such antiracist actions.

In the accounts of racist performances, we always see a group dynamic in operation. Some whites report passive, subtle, or more active techniques that they and others have used to slow or interrupt racist per-

formances and other racialized interactions in backstage arenas. The variability in more interventionist reactions is suggested in this journal excerpt from Kayla, a student in the Midwest. She reports on a Monday night routine where her group of friends goes to a local bar:

So we all ventured out to [the bar] and were hanging out, having a good time and having a couple drinks when my friend Deb out of nowhere said: "Hey guys have you ever noticed that there are never any black people at [the bar], especially on Monday nights!?" All I could say was, "what in the *world* are you talking about?" And she just said "I didn't mean it in a bad way, it's just that it's weird because black people never come here." All I could say was "well it's probably because of people like you." (Kayla)

Kayla strongly indicates her concern that a friend is talking about an absence of black Americans in what is in effect a backstage area, a bar populated with many college students on a Monday night. Clearly, most whites like Deb do in fact think in racial terms about the places they traverse, although many are uncomfortable with openly acknowledging that everyday orientation. The response of Kayla seems to show concern that her friend is stereotyping blacks and, perhaps, also violating the white norm of colorblindness in even calling attention to the absence of black Americans. One might note, too, that the white students often report drinking at bars on school nights. One particular black scholar, on hearing this commentary, wondered out loud where the black students were and suggested that they "probably were at home studying." Part of white privilege may perhaps involve having the resources to party on a school night without being labeled "lazy."

Not participating in white protagonists' racist rituals even as passive bystanders sends a message that such racist "fun and games" will not be tolerated. In another report of this type of confrontation, this journal writer challenges the white group by leaving an all-white environment where overtly racist performances are central:

All the people at the house were Caucasian males. It was real late, probably 2 in the morning and it was obvious that all my friends had been drinking alcohol for a while. As we sat there, my friends started telling racist joke after racist joke and pretty much cracking jokes on every ethnic group that has ever had a joke made up about them. They laughed and laughed and told joke after joke. My other roommate returned home, he is also a Caucasian male and he came into the back. As he sat around and listened to the jokes being told, he stood up and said, "These are really dumb

jokes,” and then he left the room. After he left my friends paused from telling the jokes for a second and then they proceeded to tell more. It was surprising to see my one roommate kind of stand up to the kids telling the racist jokes. He never has expressed that he has a problem with racist jokes or has ever really stood up and told people that racist ideas are wrong. It was sort of amusing to see the dumb look on my friends face after my roommate told them their jokes were stupid Another thing I noticed was that my friends, who were telling the jokes, weren't offended or even mad that my roommate voiced his dislike for the jokes. Hopefully it will make them think next time though. Even though they didn't stop telling the jokes right after he left, it quickly ended and it definitely didn't have the same effect on the three of them as the jokes had had before. (Travis)

A conventional racial framing of society pervades numerous aspects of this account. On some level, the whites telling jokes on an array of racial-ethnic groups likely realize that such extended performances are inappropriate, even in this backstage setting—which may account for the “dumb look” on their faces later on. The mildness of the protest, as well as the racial and gender characteristics of the challenger, likely account for why the protagonists are not especially offended. As we note in the next section, in the journal accounts white women who resist such performances are more often forced to defend their interruptions, especially when they challenge male performers.

Across our student journals, both white female writers and white male writers discuss the need for some social support if they are to challenge a white group's dynamics that are focused on racist amusements. For example, in this account of students playing the card game of euchre on a weekend night at a midwestern college, Don reveals the significance of this support:

One of the players (a white college aged male) rolled his eyes and grumbled in frustrated disbelief. He stared at the table and commented in a voice clearly loud enough for anyone of the other players or observers to hear, “My hand is blacker than east St. Louis,” meaning his cards were all black and he needed red cards to take any tricks. One of the other players (also a white college aged male) laughed loudly and commented back “Blacker than Harlem?” to which the first player responded “Oh yeah!” There were no objections to the comments even though they were clearly racist. Those who disapproved simply kept quiet and continued to play the game. The two continued their banter by beginning to imper-

sonate what they thought of as stereotypical African Americans from those regions with their voices. They said things like “Lordy, Lordy, my hand is black” and “I’m gonna pop a cap in someone’s ass fo’ dis hand.” (Don)

Here Don’s male friends engage in what is a common racist performance among whites in various settings—the mocking of what they believe to be distinctive black culture and dialect. Such mocking draws on the conventional white stereotypes and distances blacks as not in the same human category as whites. After a while, Don finally intervenes in this relaxed setting:

At this point another player (a white college aged female) groaned in a disapproving way. It was only after this grumble that I felt like any verbal objections I made would be supported, and only then did I speak up and say “C’mon guys, don’t be like that.” As soon as I said this both of the players who made the comments defended themselves by saying “What’s wrong? It’s not like we’re racist or anything. We’re just having fun and making jokes.” I replied in a short voice that “You may not be racist, but your jokes are and that doesn’t help anyone.” After that I lead the first card signaling that I wanted to play cards on my Saturday night rather than deal with these kids and their comments. (Don)

Even though Don was disturbed by his friends’ racist stereotypes and performances in this private setting, only when another white person voiced a modest disapproval does he gain the courage to confront friends. The white instigators here defend racist comments with such responses as they are not racist and are just having fun. As we have already seen, white protagonists who actively engage in blatantly racist actions often insist that they are not really racist individuals. Significantly, among other things, such assertive responses suggest that these whites are at some level conscious that what they are doing is racist. Such actions are not a matter of unconscious racism, but rather of feeling comfortable and protected in a backstage area as they perform and interact on the basis of deep racial understandings and inclinations.

Reviewing thousands of journal accounts, one sees that in the situations where white men intervene in the racist performances of others, the reprimanded whites rarely challenge the male interveners, whether the setting is private or public. However, in our data, many white women report some hostility or harassment from white men they confront about racial comments. A student at a southern university,

Tina, describes her experiences one night while camping with a large group of white college-aged friends:

I heard one man giving his opinion of black people. He was telling the rest of the group how a black friend of his had been invited to join our camping fun that evening, but the friend declined As another young, white man sitting around the campfire added his supporting argument that one of his black friends does not like to go hiking, camping, or any activity outdoors, there began to be a consensus that African Americans do not like to be out of doors.

In group settings such as this, white discussions of black Americans often provoke a type of laughter signaling some social support for generalizing in negative ways. Yet here some of the white women were uncomfortable, as this articulate student indicates in her continuation:

I was appalled at this absurd stereotype and realized that I was not the only one, as one of the young women sitting near me looked at me and said, "Tina, aren't you going to say something?" Indeed! I waited for the laughter to die down and somberly added, "You can't stereotype a whole race of people because of two opinions." There was definitely an awkward silence which followed. The initiator of the conversation laughingly replied to me, "Alright, we know you're a sociology major, but we're just speaking the truth!" Clearly, I was not laughing as he was, but also did not want a confrontation. So I offered the reply that saying all blacks do not like camping is like saying all whites could not dance I realized they did not understand because they did not want to understand. The friend nearby who had urged me to speak up looked at me with a sympathetic glance. I felt very alone. However, I felt guilty for feeling lonely, as I realize my own whiteness still benefits me and give me the entitlement of the majority every place I go. Of course I was pleased that I had spoken up to counteract the racial stereotypes I heard, but I wondered if it had made any difference. I am sad that so many people in this world, many whom I would consider my friends, are so discriminatory and often bigoted. (Tina)

Here again we encounter a private setting where only whites are present, in this case around a campfire. The social pressures lying underneath the racial conversation are apparent in the referenced laughter and in Tina's waiting a while to intervene. Here two white men describe a black friend who does not enjoy outdoor activities, and the interactive performances soon globalize this impression. The spatial segregation of racial interaction in U.S. society contributes to this lack of white under-

standing. Most whites can structure their daily activities so that they never, or rarely, have to interact significantly with black Americans. Therefore, when most whites do interact with one or two blacks, they may be tempted to rely on inherited stereotypes or to overgeneralize their limited experiences to an entire racial group.

A young sociologist, Tina recognizes the danger of quickly stereotyping a group of people and openly notes this problem for her dubious friends. Many of our journal accounts mirror this skepticism of social science reasoning or research when it contradicts their racial stereotypes, notions, and imagery. Deciding how and when to confront the group was a courageous decision with significant social implications. At least one other white woman was disturbed but, instead of confronting the group, she only prodded Tina. Tina timed her confrontation, speaking only after being prodded and when the laughter died down. Like other confronters in similar situations, she reveals several emotions; she feels sad and lonely for speaking out. She is frustrated with her friends. Then she feels guilty for her feelings because, as she notes, she still benefits from white privilege. Interventions into racist performances almost always create awkwardness and disrupt the flow of interactions, thereby entailing a social price for the intervener.

Probably reflecting on their lives mainly because of the assignment to keep a regular journal, numerous whites acknowledge that they could have done more to confront racist comments from other whites. However, as we have seen, there are often significant costs associated with objecting to racist interactions and performances. In this report, Katie describes a distinctive racial event involving her questioning another white woman's backstage performance accenting the need for defensive actions:

After school, I hung out with a friend of mine and a couple of her friends that I didn't know (all white). They were smoking outside and talking about a party going on this weekend. One of the girls made a comment that it might be in a bad neighborhood. She also said that we need to be careful because the neighborhood has a lot of black people. And I jumped in and asked if that is why she thinks it is a bad neighborhood because a lot of black folks live there. She looked at me and asked who I was. I introduced myself and she responded by saying, "You're not invited." I couldn't believe that but I realized that she thought I was trying to offend her. The fact is that she couldn't even back up her comment by saying that, "This is the reason why I said that." The fact of the matter is that she just said that it was a bad neighborhood because

black people live there, not because she heard of a mugging or killing in that neighborhood. Right? (Katie)

As we have seen, the backstage arena can involve more than white friends and family. Here again a white stranger feels comfortable sharing her stereotyped racial framing of certain city neighborhoods. After Katie confronts her in a moderate way, the offended woman did not rethink her racial stereotyping or even justify her comment, but quickly uninvites Katie to the party. As we've previously discussed, a key factor in backstage interactions is the assumption that whites will share racial thinking, or at least not confront and disrupt racist interactions.

One way that gender impacts backstage conversations is when white women are concerned about the dangers of interacting with black people, specifically black men. In this account, a white woman warns other women to be careful because of the mere presence of black people. Mentioning gangs or muggings is not necessary to convey the reality of a "bad" neighborhood, as these terms are already connected to the typical white view of a black neighborhood. The implicit message is clear: Black people occupy a certain space and that makes it unsafe for white women, and white women should stay away or seek the patriarchal protection of white men.

RACIAL EVENTS: FAMILY AND NEIGHBORHOOD

Family and neighborhood settings are often important backstage arenas where one sees whites enact racial events. Not surprisingly, the student accounts frequently describe racial interactions and performances in home settings with parents and other close relatives. They include many examples of parental generation and reinforcement of racist ideas and actions, and sometimes discuss their own problems in responding to parental racism. Parental understandings on racial matters, whether blatantly racist or racially nuanced, are passed along to children, as we see in this student's account of a visit home to the suburbs of a large northern city:

A few years ago they changed one of the area codes to the prefix numbers of my telephone number. Anyway, due this change we receive a lot of wrong phone calls because people forget to dial the 1 for the area code. Since my mom is the one to usually answer the phone she is getting extremely frustrated with this especially with the black individuals who make phone calls at 2 or 3 am. They ask for someone in a strong Ebonics dialect and when she says that person does not live here they insist that we did not hear them cor-

rectly. When my mom is done talking with them in a half asleep yet polite voice she would slam the phone down and yell "Stupid black people don't they ever sleep! At least they could apologize for waking someone up in the middle of the night!" (Danielle)

Legitimate annoyance at a late call is described in racial terms by parent and child, even though the callers' racial characteristics have no bearing on the irritation. Indeed, we can see how deeply racial markers impact white thinking beyond the physical traits. Danielle's mother cannot see the caller, but presumes to know their racial characteristics based on the time of night and auditory sounds of the caller's voice. Here a certain dialect of English, designated as "strong Ebonics," is part of the conceptual framing used in a racialized performance backstage. Racial thinking so pervades this society that most white Americans, often unconsciously, attend to racial characteristics when interacting with others, making negative judgments even when they do not see the latter. In contrast, when a white person does something to irritate another white person, the white identity of the irritating person is almost never cited. Also suggested here is the difference between the frontstage and the backstage: The mother is polite and nonracist on the phone, but angrily yells racialized comments backstage.

Much parental socialization on racial matters is quite open and overt. Tiffany gives this account of interactions in a home setting in the Midwest where her family is watching a television news show:

We were watching the news and my father (white male in 40s) noticed that most of the stories they were telling had to deal with primarily black people. Once he started that the negative black jokes poured out of his mouth. He had some customers in the house (we own our own ... repair shop) and he was still telling the jokes. He never thought twice about it. He never thought about what his customers might say or do. Some of the jokes were along the lines of "Why is Tylenol white? Answer: Cause if it was black it wouldn't work!" Everyone in the room was laughing and they all had their own responses to the jokes. One lady (around 30 years of age) said "Yeah ... that is true." (Tiffany)

Note the array of actors in this private white space. A male baby-boomer engages in an extensive backstage performance, not only in front of family members, but also in front of presumably white customers at his house. The backstage setting grows to include more than family members. White-skin privilege is conspicuous in accounts like this, where the central protagonist is unreflective about his performance and

assumes that no white stranger will object. Some customers seem more than passive bystanders, but rather provide some cheerleading for racist joking in what seems to be an aggressively masculine performance.

The multiracial character of many large U.S. cities, especially as distorted in much of the media, seems to generate racialized concern and reinforce negative stereotypes in many white minds. We saw this in Chapter 1 when Crystal's father said he liked his New England city: It was not like "all the other big cities he could think of" because there "weren't a lot of black people running around." Another student reports here on her father's view of a nearby large city as dangerous for limousine and taxicab drivers like himself:

Today I was talking with my dad who owns his own limousine service and we were discussing how he would never drive a taxicab in the city because by law they are forced to pick up anybody and go into any area of the city. Practically once a month a taxi driver is stabbed or shot and robbed because they carry cash. Very often these attacks occur in the black areas of the city. It has gotten to the point where even black taxi drivers have refused to pick up in black neighborhoods with a high crime rate. (Chelsea)

The journal writer's father will never drive a cab or limousine into the city because he would not be able to discriminate among possible riders, a view with which Chelsea sympathizes. The image of big city life as racially dangerous is here passed along to another generation. The racialized portrait is not nuanced, but effectively accents all "black areas" in the city as those that are dangerous, and no other areas are mentioned.

Many racial events in backstage arenas are oriented to protecting whites' racial turf and territory. Thus, a midwestern college student reports on going home to be with her family and offers this detailed account of her parents' racial performances:

My Dad, who is . . . pretty conservative, was talking about how he wants to move to the farm land that we have He said that "the blacks are taking over the neighborhood." He went to the [grocery store] up the street to get the steaks for dinner and said that the parking lot was "infested" with blacks. My mom also commented that she didn't want me to be going to that plaza at night especially by myself. I understand their concern about me going to a public place in the dark, but their concern was more over the fact that there were more black people going to that plaza. My Dad has said that we would have to move soon because now the property value is going to go down now that more black people are

moving in. Unfortunately, even though what my dad was saying was racist and judgmental, it's the truth. The property value has gone down in several areas that had more black people moving away from the city area. As more black people move away from the city, the farther white people seem to go. Some people just don't like change and just remove themselves from situation that makes them uncomfortable, like my father and those who have already moved. Some people don't like change and do something about it, like those who have harassed the few blacks that have moved into the neighborhood. Then there are a few people who embrace the change as something that is bound to happen and learn to live with one another. I can't change how my father feels about the black community, but hopefully we stay where we are for my siblings and me so we can live a more diverse area. (Erica)

Even though few black families have as yet moved into this white family's neighborhood, Erica's father and mother give a joint racial performance. Her father is fearful and resorts to the common racist framing of blacks "taking over" and "infesting" areas. Although the student describes his views as "racist," she defends them by arguing that property values go down as blacks move in. Actually, research data on desegregating residential settings is complex.¹⁶ Sometimes prices increase, especially after the initial flight of some white families. Moreover, the racially prejudiced whites who suddenly start fleeing a residential area just because a few black families move in are responsible for whatever dramatic price fluctuations occur, not the pioneering black families. If prejudiced whites did not start moving, no dramatic drops in housing worth would occur. Interestingly, this young woman would prefer to stay in a diverse residential area, and she does not seem as fearful of black people as her parents. Once again, we see the resigned view held by many whites who are uneasy with racial stereotyping and discrimination—that "I can't change how my father feels."

Significant racial events often involve white neighbors. Here, Kelly, from a large midwestern city, reports going home for the weekend. In a strong racial performance, a white neighbor tells her how he seeks to manage what he views as white residential territory:

On my way into the house, my next door neighbor stopped me to see how I liked school and asked questions like that. He is in his late 40s and is very prejudiced, but other than that, a pretty nice man. For Flag Day, Memorial Day, and the Fourth of July, he hangs an old Confederate flag outside of his house. Anyway, I noticed that the house on the other side of his is for sale. I asked

him if he knew if anyone was looking at it. He said no, but then added that as long [as] it wasn't a gay couple, or anyone of color, it was fine with him. I asked him what he meant, even though I knew what he was thinking, I just wanted to hear his response. He said, "You know how those niggers are, they'll just bring the property value on our houses down. They're all lazy and loud." I just told him that I didn't know any black people like that and then went in to my house. He is a pretty ignorant man and not many people in our neighborhood agree with his thinking. (Kelly)

Here, again, a white man in the baby-boom generation gives a strong backstage performance in which he presses on a younger person his racist and homophobic views. He offers a white-racist framing that stereotypes and blames black families rather than whites' race-based panic selling as problematical. Here racist speech is linked to a visual display. In most U.S. regions, and mainly since the desegregation era of the 1960s, displaying the Confederate battle flag aggressively has become popular with some whites desiring to proclaim their racial views and celebrate their white "southern heritage." The student is willing to subtly counter her neighbor's view, yet is not willing to openly confront him. She adopts the typical interpretation downplaying a white racist performance with a comment about his being "pretty nice," once again providing a commentary that stresses positive individual attributes over negative social implications in assessing whites' racist behavior.

STEREOTYPING OTHER PEOPLE OF COLOR: THE EXAMPLE OF LATINOS

In the backstage areas, white commentaries and behaviors often target people of color other than African Americans. While roughly three quarters of the journal accounts of negative racial events involve whites' stereotyping or otherwise acting negatively toward black Americans, about ten percent of the accounts involve similar stereotyping or negative attacks on Latinos, with the remainder of the accounts focusing on an array of other groups, including Asian, Jewish, and Middle Eastern Americans.

The growing numbers of Latinos in the U.S. population seem to offer many whites new targets for their stereotyping and racial hatred. Let us consider here some journal excerpts describing racial events involving Latinos. Unlike the majority of whites in Europe, many whites in the United States seem to have little use for Americans who speak languages other than English, especially if they speak the Spanish language.¹⁷ For

example, one white student who works as a cashier in a northern city reports the following experience:

I was cashing customers out and a few Latinos came in line after my other customers. There were four men ages like between their late teens and early twenties. They were buying a lot of unknown produce, or rather unpopular [produce].... They spoke in a dialect of Spanish and I couldn't understand what they were saying Then I asked myself, why are you even in this country if you don't know the language, why don't you go back to where you came from? (Erin)

Revealing her inner thoughts about an encounter with Spanish speakers, Erin describes her provincialism. Apparently put off by the type of produce purchased, she next found herself thinking that they were not from the United States, when they may in fact have been. Significant is her concern that she could not understand what they were saying—which is a commentary one often hears from xenophobic whites who have a limited knowledge of the world's languages and cultures. As we have already seen, the wish that those who are not white would leave the United States is significant in much white commentary.

Numerous whites in our sample echoed a certain frustration or paranoia when around non-English speakers. As we saw in Chapter 2 when Ian's friend yelled "speak English" to strangers in a mall, this is not limited to whites' interactions with Latinos, but with many other language speakers. One white woman in the Midwest wrote in her journal that it bothered her when she was around non-English speakers because "they could be saying shit about me right in front of me and I would never know." Indeed, much hostility and ignorance regarding non-English speakers emanates from whites, as is illustrated in the following account. Here, Colleen discusses going to a gas station where her boyfriend Frank works and meeting his white co-worker:

A Latino man came in to buy gas and wanted a lottery ticket. He barely spoke English and what he was able to say was coated with a thick accent. After he left, Frank's co-worker said "If you come to America, you should speak American." Frank and I looked at each other, both of us didn't know what to say or do. Finally, Frank said, "American? America doesn't even have a national language." His co-worker said, "Well, you know what I mean." We just let his comment go and I left. (Colleen)

Even though Frank's co-worker is meeting Colleen for the first time, he assumes this work setting is a safe backstage area to make xenophobic and uninformed comments once the Latino left the store.

In this journal entry, a male student in the South comments on a racial event at a late-night party of white young people:

We (a few white people and I between the ages of 18-25) were at my friend's apartment having a little party. The residents below us were having a scuffle with some people outside on their porch. We went outside to watch. It was about 3-3:30 in the morning. The people that lived in the apartment were all or mostly white. I'm not sure because I couldn't see everyone, and the people that they were arguing with were Hispanic and African American. There was one Hispanic male that was causing problems in particular. This man kept jumping around, screaming insults, and people up in our apartment were referring to him as a "little Mexican jumping bean," because he was small and hopping around quickly. (Nick)

Once again, white observers are quick to note certain group characteristics and stereotype those involved in an argument near them. Many whites seem to group various darker-skinned people, including those who have relatively recently come to occupy their minds, somehow with black Americans and thus as problematical for U.S. society.

We see a related tendency in this journal account from Allison, who describes a distinctive racial event involving a relative and her friend:

I was talking with the same cousin and her same friend (both white females) and she was telling me that since I've been away at college, my other cousin (also white female) had a Spanish boyfriend. She then proceeded to say that she hates Mexicans and her friend and I chimed in I am shocked at the words that came out of our mouths. It's just that where we live, the Mexicans are seen as a nuisance who cut our lawns and can barely talk to us in English. We also view them as dirty and perverted because they are always making sexual comments to any girl that walks by them One becomes fed up with it, and tends to see all Mexicans and people of Hispanic descent in the same manner. (Allison)

The team performance here involves both the recounter and her cousin, with both asserting intensely emotional stereotypes that they have picked up from the negative framing of Mexicans and Mexican Americans. In Allison's account, she connects a "Spanish boyfriend" with Mexicans and all people of "Hispanic decent." These negative views significantly parallel stereotypes and prejudices that whites have

long applied to black Americans, including hostile generalizations of the racialized outgroup as dirty, a lower-class nuisance (who are actually providing a service to whites), and oversexed. Yet other stereotypes position themselves in the white racial framing of Latinos, as we see in recurring negative comments about lack of knowledge of English and speaking Spanish. This student shows some awareness of her stereotyping, yet still chimes in at the time and later defends exaggerations about Latino behavior.

This negative framing of U.S. Latinos can be found in all U.S. regions, as we observe in this account from a student in the Midwest:

I have grown up around Hispanic people The Hispanic people I have been around are middle aged Hispanic men who come to [names a resort town] to work, leaving their wives and children behind in Mexico, and living thirteen to a one bedroom apartment and driving crappy cars without four wheel drive and snow tires in the winter These groups of men feel compelled to whistle and yell at every female that passes by them and it's offensive. They also are responsible for nearly all the crime that occurs in our town—the little that does occur being theft, disturbing the peace, and fights. I know that it is because they have no money that they steal, but that doesn't make it okay Being only exposed to this group of Hispanics, I have developed a dangerously negative stereotype of all Hispanic people that I know is unfair. (Taylor)

This somewhat reflective commentary is pervaded by much irony and the contradictory realizations that make up much racialized thinking. The student recognizes that it is extreme poverty that drives the men from families in Mexico to labor hard here, although she does not make the connection between whites' better quality of life in her town and the poorly paid labor of these exploited workers. The poverty conditions in which they live, and the poor cars they drive (without four-wheel drive!) are a direct result of low wages received working for the benefit of local whites. Like many whites, this student strongly links Mexican immigrants to petty crime, even though relatively few actually engage in such behavior. Note too that the concern expressed by the last two diarists about sexist comments by Latino workers may indicate more about the workers' racial characteristics than about their reportedly sexist behavior. As we discussed in Chapter 2, some white women specifically wrote about feeling flattered by the attention of some white men, but fearful or offended at the attention of men of color.

In numerous accounts of racial events involving white views of or interactions with Latinos, we see some white recognition that Latinos,

and especially immigrants, are doing much of the hard manual labor necessary to keep the U.S. economy afloat. To take another example, Jamie at a southeastern university records an incident that happened when she and friends were driving around looking at Christmas decorations:

Some of the prestigious subdivision entrances had the most elaborate light spectacles In the midst of our admiration, one particular subdivision entrance appeared not as extravagantly decorated with only half of the trees and shrubs lit up in the night. Critiquing this apparently half-completed holiday display, Emma, a . . . white female, said, "The Mexicans didn't finish there." ... This young white female began to give an explanation of her overtly racist comment. She explained that during her undergraduate years in Texas that it was a common practice before the Christmas season to see "Mexicans" work outside of affluent subdivisions hanging hundreds of strands of Christmas lights. I noticed her generalization of the label "Mexicans" as she clearly could not know the nationality of the people she observed... .

Jamie continues with the account:

Emma continued and admitted that she had perhaps generalized that Hispanics (Yes, she used this more politically correct label that time!) also were employed in [names city] to decorate the subdivisions with Christmas lights. I was pleased that she came to her own conclusion that she had stereotyped. I added my own knowledge of the Hispanic population growth in [names city] in recent years with the economic benefits their entrance into the local labor market has created.

Belatedly, as she reports, she realized that the third student in the car had been silent:

Linda did not speak up during this entire conversation Linda's mother is Mexican. Her father is white. I had forgotten this during the entire conversation and only now recalled that she [was] silent on that drive. I abashedly confess that I had never thought of Linda as "one of them." And I had naively hoped that my own ethnocentric stereotypes had faded away this semester. (Jamie)

Some moderately stereotyped commentary on Mexican workers putting up lights is central to this interactive set of performances. After her comments, Emma does finally admit that she is probably generalizing inaccurately. Jamie also tries to counter with a positive statement on the important economic impact of Latino workers and families in a city

with which she is familiar. Clearly, at the time, neither white student thought about the personal impact of their comments, for they had forgotten that the third student was partially Mexican in ancestry. The latter was treated in effect as an "invisible woman," a white response about which women and men of color have complained for centuries.

Whites have the power and privilege to easily appropriate the image, clothing, or language of people of color, usually as part of a joking or mocking performance. Thus, this racial event begins as a white roommate walks into the room where Nathan is typing:

We talked about our day for a couple minutes. Then out of nowhere he said, "Do I look Mexican today?" Originally I was only half paying attention to what he was saying, but this comment grabbed my attention. Not really sure but what he meant by "looking Mexican," I asked him what that was supposed to mean. He replied, "I dunno, it reminds me of how Mexicans dress..." He continued on, saying, "I've got the plaid shirt, a white undershirt, and jeans." I then said, "Isn't that how a lot of people dress?" He answered me with, "When I think of Mexicans I think of a plaid shirt, white undershirt or wife-beater, and slicked back hair. I've got the plaid shirt, white undershirt, and my hair is still wet from the shower. I think I look Mexican." I didn't really have any response and continued on with my homework. Personally I didn't think he looked Mexican at all, but I wasn't looking to start a debate. This situation is an example of racial stereotyping that all too often makes us prejudice people of a specific race before even coming close to them. (Nathan)

In this backstage performance the roommate has an image of a working class Mexican American man in mind, one with a specific physical appearance and clothing—the latter including a sleeveless undershirt supposedly worn by working class men who abuse their wives. This image is likely one derived from the framing of Latinos one finds in the mass media. Note too that Nathan does not question him out of concern for starting a debate, even though he shows later that he was aware of the crude stereotyping. Once again, we observe the common reaction of whites who do not wish to degrade a personal relationship by discussing negative stereotyping or racial discrimination.

GENDER DIFFERENCES: INTERACTIONS BACKSTAGE

In the journal accounts, as we have already discussed, we often observe gendered dimensions to the racial performances and reactions by

whites in various settings. One way that gender impacts backstage and frontstage conversations and actions can be seen when white women are concerned about the dangers of interacting with black people, especially black men, as in previous accounts where white women avoid black people or a "bad neighborhood." In the last chapter, we saw how white men often hold a similar view and act in a paternalistic way to "protect" white women from black men. The message in these cases is that black men occupy a space that is unsafe for white women.

In addition, in backstage settings where racial events involve white men and women, the men often serve as central protagonists and instigators of racist performances and other racist actions. As we have seen, white men disproportionately make racist jokes and similar racially barbed comments. In backstage situations, the male performances are frequently not only racist but in line with the assertive and patriarchal type of masculinity one finds in many families. In contrast, white women are more likely to support or "police" the men's more actively racist performances. Certainly, white women are sometimes protagonists, and they often play a key supportive role as acolytes in racist activities in a great many social situations. Periodically, however, white women, more often than men, operate to channel, slow down, or stop the racist commentaries and actions in backstage and frontstage settings.

Numerous students, especially female students, make specific comments about this role of gender in backstage interactions dealing with racial matters. Thus, Carissa comments about what sometimes happens among her group of white friends.

The white men got on the subject of so-called nicknames for black people. Some mentioned were porch monkeys, jigaboos, tree swingers, etc. The one thing I took notice of was that not one girl made a comment. Most of them just seemed to stare off and pretend to not hear anything. Is this because women are more sensitive? Or are they just afraid to express their true feelings?
(Carissa)

Repeatedly, male and female diarists of varying ages indicate that a gender division frequently appears within the backstage. Carissa speculates that it could be women's socialization to be concerned about other people's feelings that may account for women not as aggressively contributing to many racist conversations. Similarly, women's socialization may account for why women often do not, as here, challenge the men.

In this insightful narrative provided by Dee, a student in the Midwest, we observe an important gendered component to social interaction:

It was my 20th birthday tonight and we had a party at my house. Everyone there was white one of my guy friends, Ron said the "n" word. Another one of my friends, Samantha, gets really mad when she hears people use that word. She says it is dirty and disgusting. When Samantha heard Ron use this word she really reamed him out. My other guy friends thought it was real funny that Samantha was yelling at Ron so much so they started putting the "n" word into every sentence. A lot of people laughed at first, but pretty soon even the people who had originally thought it was funny started to feel uncomfortable. This stupid word game went on for about 10 minutes or so, before they finally got bored of it. There really was nothing any of us could say; because it seemed like saying anything would just egg them on. This is another example of how people my age who are white just have no concept of how hurtful that word is to another race. I'm sure if we could feel how black people feel when they hear that word, we would never say it again. I know that none of my friends want to hurt anyone's feelings; they are just immature and ignorant sometimes. (Dee)

Once again, the men serve as instigators of racist speech action, and a woman acts to police the men's aggressively racist activities. The backstage context typically involves social pressure not to resist one's friends' behavior. Dee is caught in a complicated situation, as it is her party, and she does not want to spoil the social event. By choosing to be passive during such actively racist performances, white bystanders send the message to other people that such actions are permissible. The interaction is in a safe backstage space. The participants have control over who is, and is not, invited in this backstage. The journal writer speculates that the men use racist epithets because they are immature and ignorant—yet are ultimately good people who don't "want to hurt anyone." Yet, the men seem aware of the n-word's deeply symbolic meanings and disregard them, for there are no immediate consequences and the racist performance brings a benefit by showing how tight-knit the group is to tolerate their behavior.

Various white women note that one function of some racist joking among white men seems to be to harass or mock white women such as Samantha. Here Elaine, a student at a western university, explores this gendered reality:

I was over at a friend's house the other night and since she lives with boy roommates I'm used to hearing offensive talk. Sometimes when I come over they get all goofy and try to impress me especially if I bring a friend or something. Well on this night they

were joking around and someone got on the subject of telling African American jokes. They all knew about 10 jokes apiece so of course each one had to take turns telling them. They could tell after about the second joke that I didn't appreciate them because I wasn't really smiling or laughing but for some reason they like to bother me so they continued telling the jokes. I know they've told the jokes many times before because my friend rolled her eyes in recognition. They weren't telling the jokes for each other's benefit, but to see how far they could go before I got upset. I tried not to give them the benefit, but I eventually left the room. The jokes ceased right afterwards. (Elaine)

Elaine notes the critical role of a social network in men telling antiblack jokes. Each man knew many. This not only shows how important such hoary jokes are in the whites' racial framing of society but also indicates how committed men like these are to learning and performing blatantly racist joking. This is not the first time, for they shared their jokes as part of a recurring ritual. Note too that whites doing such racist performances generally desire an appreciative and conforming audience. Elaine believes that they were telling the jokes just to upset her—the gendered dimension to such joking. Even in the backstage, these white men knew what they were doing was inappropriate and targeted, for when the stimulus left, their performances reportedly ceased.

The gendered pattern of responses in the journal accounts also raises issues similar to those suggested in the research of Peggy McIntosh, Tiffany Hogan, and Julie Netzer, researchers who found that white women can sometimes draw on their personal experiences with gender discrimination to better understand the character or impact of racial discrimination.¹⁸

PREPARATION FOR THE FRONTSTAGE

In our extensive data, another recurring theme that emerges is that the backstage is frequently a preparation and learning arena where whites get ready in some fashion for frontstage relations with people of color. In these private settings, whites teach each other how to act, or not to act, in the multiracial and multicultural frontstage. The journal accounts show recurring educational efforts by whites directed at other whites, including an offering of warnings of various kinds. Backstage interactions involve whites correcting each other's racially related vocabulary and misconceptions or myths about people of color. This specific socialization is educational in nature. Generally, such education is different from whites' teaching each other blatant stereotypes, openly racist notions, and racist inclinations, as these assertively racist

views and actions are not intended, in the social politeness view at least, to be used openly in the frontstage settings with people of color.

The diary accounts show that white education backstage, as part of the preparation for the frontstage, frequently involves younger whites giving advice to older whites. A college student in the Northeast recounts an interesting racial event that involves educating her grandmother:

On this particular afternoon my friend Yvonne's mother and grandmother were visiting my friend from California [all are white]. ...After a little bit of casual conversation, ... Yvonne began to list the restaurant options. Upon her mention of the Chinese restaurant uptown, Yvonne's grandmother interrupted and began to tell a story. She said, "... The other day I was at a restaurant and I had a lovely Oriental waitress—" She didn't get any further because Yvonne interrupted her. "Grandma!" my friend exclaimed, "*People are not 'oriental.' Food is oriental and clothing is oriental, and there is even a part of the world often referred to as 'The Orient.'*" But you can't say that people are 'oriental!'" Yvonne's grandmother looked at her, completely shocked that she had been rebuked, but she was also pretty confused. "Well, then, Yvonne," her grandmother said, "What *are they* called?" Yvonne told her grandmother that people from China or Japan, etc. are often referred to as *Asian*, or even directly by their heritage, if it is known, such as *Chinese* or *Japanese*. But she laughed again as she said, "Not *oriental!*" Her grandmother was pretty oblivious, you could tell, but accepted the mistake she had made and went back to her story, making sure to emphasize that she had an *Asian* waitress this time. (Caroline)

The backstage, where white relatives and friends gather privately, can be an educational setting where people learn a more accurate or less stereotyped terminology for racial and ethnic groups. Yvonne gives an extended antiracist performance that seeks to prepare her grandmother for future interactions in frontstage situations. Even though no Asians are present, Yvonne feels it important to teach her grandmother that describing someone as "Oriental" is unacceptable in the frontstage or the backstage. In backstage arenas, whites sometimes act to make other whites accountable on racial matters. Ongoing interaction is central in such backstage events: Whites are actively teaching, learning, and reconceptualizing racial language, ideas, and actions. Yvonne's mother and the journal writer were also involved and allowed the education to progress without interruption. In her journal, Caroline further admits

that she is grateful that Yvonne corrected the mistake even when there were no immediate consequences for using the term.

Numerous journal writers indicate that their parents, grandparents, and other relatives commonly use stereotyped, archaic, or socially impolite terms in referring to people of color as "colored," "Negro," or "Oriental." However, the vast majority indicate that they do *not* inform their elders that these terms are no longer socially acceptable, probably for fear of seeming disrespectful or because the students do not like the tensions from family confrontations or do not see changing their opinions as likely. Many white students also comment that things will eventually get better, with phrases like, "Racism will die when grandpa dies." The common assumption among young whites, as well as among many media pundits, is that younger generation is not racist and thus is very tolerant of, informed about, and accepting of other racial groups. Yet, even a quick scanning of the accounts in this book suggests that this naïve thinking is *far* from true.

Whites often teach each other in the backstage about what is or is not allowed in a racially exclusive backstage setting and performance. Will, a southern college student, recounts a racial event in which a woman tries to teach her family:

I was eating Thanksgiving dinner with my friend and his family (southern-Baptist Caucasian family). There were several generations at the house. Everyone had a comic attitude, always looking for opportunities to crack jokes. At one point, my friend's cousin said the word "nigger" but I didn't hear what she was talking about. However, I heard my friend's sister-in-law say, "Don't say that stuff around the kids, last week they almost got kicked out of day-care for calling a boy that." The moment the kids left, my friend's brother said, "What do you call a nigger with a wooden leg? Shit on a stick." I felt really uncomfortable, especially since my parents would have smacked me in the face just for saying that word, let alone the context in which it was used. Everyone but me laughed, and I tried to pretend to, but I could feel myself being really fake. (Will)

In a backstage situation in the holiday season, several white performances are evident. Some whites make racist comments and jokes in a private home among invited white family and friends. A mother uses the backstage as an opportunity to teach other adults not to use racist epithets in front of children. Adults prepare the children, so the usual racist language must be censored until the children learn that there are different expectations frontstage and backstage. Already some have

used the racist term at daycare, thereby indicating that they have heard it somewhere and understand enough of its meaning to apply it. Children make experimental use of learned racist terminology. Researchers Debra Van Ausdale and Joe Feagin have documented white children's commonplace racist behaviors; they have shown in detail that children are quick to pick up adult's (or other children's) racist terms and experiment with them in interactions with other children.¹⁹

After the children leave, a brother uses the harsh epithet in the context of a crude joke. With numerous relatives involved, the journal writer senses social pressure to laugh. The family members apparently have no discomfort at telling racist jokes in front of an invited stranger. Though Will could confront the family, he feels social pressure not to resist. Many white students comment that even though they may not agree with racist performances backstage, they do not want to disrupt actions that are "just part of the fun."

In their preparations for frontstage settings, and sometimes for backstage settings, whites frequently caution each other about future encounters and interactions that may take place. In various journal accounts, whites warn each other in advance when an unsafe backstage interaction may transpire. Whites warn others that people who may be mistaken for a "white" backstage member, such as a light-skinned Latino or black person, are not in fact safe to perform before. White students give similar warnings for backstage situations where a person of color may not have been expected, such as the case of the black roommate mentioned in the account in Chapter 1, where Becky warns white male friends back home that her suitemate is black.

Whites often try to avoid an unprotected or unreliable backstage where persons who are assumed to be "safe" turn out not to be. (We explore this topic further in Chapter 5.) In this account, Gail's cousin warns her family that her new boyfriend is different:

I went home to visit my family for birthday celebrations and ... my cousin brought her boyfriend and they were both home visiting from San Francisco. None of my family members made any racial comments, but before we met my cousin's new boyfriend, she just asked everyone to watch what they say. My family can sometimes say some racial things that might offend people who don't know our family that well, and how everyone interacts. Also, my cousin wanted to make sure nobody made any cheap Jewish comments because her new boyfriend was Jewish. (Gail)

Knowing this northern family's history, Gail's cousin warns them in advance. Gail comments that her family sometimes makes racial

comments as part of their interactive style, once again indicating the normality of racial performances during social bonding in the backstage. By indicating their collective consent to the warning and not making racial comments, the family members clearly recognize that such are indeed racist and inappropriate in some social contexts. Consequently, such accounts also suggest there are some social contexts where racist comments are appropriate.

Like Gail's cousin, Jared, a college student in the South, warns his roommate that a Jewish woman is visiting:

A friend of mine and her two roommates came over to play cards with my roommate and me. John, my roommate, had never met them, so he asked if they were good looking, which is a pretty normal question. Well in asking me that, I remember that one of them, who has red hair, is Jewish. I felt I had to warn my roommate of this so he didn't make a fool of himself by making a Jewish joke. He then informed me that I should have instead warned her that he may make Jewish jokes and it's nothing personal. (Jared)

In a safe backstage conversation, Jared takes measures to ensure that his roommate does not generate an anti-Semitic performance and create an uncomfortable frontstage. The group interaction could have been an enjoyable gathering just playing cards, but John is too committed to anti-Semitic jokes to hold back even temporarily in front of a guest. The socially embedded negative framing of Jewish people as not fully acceptable prohibits what could have been some new and engaging personal relationships.

Significantly, John presses the old racist defense that anti-Semitic comments are not targeted against a nearby person, but rather just against a "generic" Jew. Throughout the journals, many whites comment that a racial stereotype directed against an outgroup is not intended to apply directly to a person from that group who is in front of them. In this manner, conventional racial or ethnic stereotyping is protected and excused while at the same time it harms the particular member of the targeted racial or ethnic group whose feelings are ignored in the racist performance.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have examined how whites interact and perform racial roles in backstage arenas. Specifically, these backstage places serve several important functions in the everyday lives of white Americans. The more common use of the backstage is as a safe space

to relax certain frontstage expectations about openly racist commentaries and other overtly racist actions. In this relatively safe space, racist performances and other actions are common and viewed as normal, even when unexpected strangers drop in. Within the backstage regions described by the journal writers, even more reflective whites often construe a "truly racist person" to be more than just a white person who engages in racist commentary or behavior. Indeed, for many, apparently only members of the Ku Klux Klan and other such violence-oriented groups are really "racists." In these narratives, we observe the constant importance of social networks and group dynamics. We also see when and how whites confront each other in the backstage, as well as the very important role of gender in shaping and differentiating many backstage performances.

As we have seen, the backstage is also a place where whites get themselves ready for racial interactions and performances in frontstage arenas. In such cases, white participants often educate each other about correct racial terminology and procedures of interaction. Whites use such a setting as an opportunity to warn or caution other whites about what they should or should not do in future interactions with people of color or those, such as Jewish Americans, who are somehow not considered to be "safe whites."

Though most of the thousands of journal accounts we have examined are negative in regard to racial matters, some of the detailed narratives suggest that some whites are beginning to take new and more positive steps, however tentative, across the color line. For example, one student at a mid-western college gives an account of going home one Friday and encountering a positive racial event involving her mother and stepfather:

While my mom put on her makeup I asked her what her plans were for the night. She told me my stepfather and herself were taking her friend from work out to dinner. Then she threw in quite proudly; "You have heard me talk about my friend 'Rhonda' from work. Remember, she is black." My parents have never had any friends of a minority group before, but they have recently started attending a church which has about half black members and half white members. I have attended the church many times and the preacher (white) holds many sermons against racism and prejudices. One of his most famous lines is: "All races should join together in unity because God is color blind." I found it interesting that my mother was inviting Rhonda to dinner for the first time in the nine years they have worked together, immediately after beginning to attend this racially diverse church.

My mother went on to say, "You know Rhonda has been really short on money since her husband left her nine months ago and I thought taking her out to dinner would be a real treat for her. She has really been looking forward to it." Then my boyfriend came to pick me up and he also asked my mom what her plans were for the evening. She told him her plans in the exact way she told me. He said, "That is nice, have a good night." When we got into my boyfriend's car, he laughed and said, "Your mom was so proud that she was taking Rhonda out to dinner because she is black. It's like she thinks she is going to get brownie points with God or something." (Alicia)

New and relatively positive performances often take place backstage as white Americans begin to develop friendships across the color line in this supposedly racially desegregated society. The diarist takes note of the fact that it took her mother many years to work up to going out with a black colleague, an outing that her mother explains twice in terms that are cheerful and accentuated. The college students are insightful in interpreting what might be going on, with some discussion of the link between certain religious concerns and taking the woman to dinner. Whatever this mother's reasoning, nonetheless, these tentative steps across the color line are critical for change to come in this still highly racist society.

NOTES

1. See Joe R. Feagin, *Racist America* (New York: Routledge, 2000), chapters 3–5.
2. Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination* (New York: Pantheon, 1988), pp. 12, 15. We draw here on collaborative work with Hernán Vera. See Joe R. Feagin, Hernán Vera, and Nikitah Imani, *The Agony of Education: Black Students at White Colleges and Universities* (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 14–15.
3. See Joe R. Feagin and Eileen O'Brien, *White Men on Race* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003).
4. Joel Kovel, *White Racism: A Psychohistory* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970).
5. See Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2000); and S. E. Anderson, *The Black Holocaust: For Beginners* (New York: Writers and Readers Publishing, 1995).
6. Michael Billig, "Humour and Hatred: The Racist Jokes of the Ku Klux Klan," *Discourse and Society* 12 (2001): 267–89.

7. See Patricia G. Devine, "Stereotypes and Prejudice: Their Automatic and Controlled Components," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 56, no. 1 (1989): 5–18.
8. See Joe R. Feagin and Clairece B. Feagin, *Racial and Ethnic Relations* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 2003), pp. 159–215.
9. Joe R. Feagin and Karyn D. McKinney, *The Many Costs of Racism* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003).
10. John Hartigan, "Who Are These White People? Rednecks, Hillbillies, and White Trash as Marked Racial Subjects" in *White Out: The Continuing Significance of Racism*, eds. Ashley W. Doane and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 95–111.
11. See R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press), p. 77.
12. Nina Eliasoph, "'Everyday Racism' in a Culture of Political Avoidance: Civil Society, Speech, and Taboo," *Social Problems* 46, no. 4 (1999): 479–95.
13. Joe R. Feagin, *Systemic Racism: A Theory of Oppression* (New York: Routledge, 2006); see also Joe R. Feagin and Eileen O'Brien, *White Men on Race: Power, Privilege and the Shaping of Cultural Consciousness* (Boston: Beacon, 2003), chapter 1.
14. Gloria Yamato, "Something About the Subject Makes it Hard to Name," in *Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color*, ed. Gloria Anzaldúa (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1990), pp. 20–24.
15. See Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *White Supremacy and Racism in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001).
16. Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); David R. Harris "Property Values Drop When Blacks Move in, Because ...": Racial and Socioeconomic Determinants of Neighborhood Desirability," *American Sociological Review* 64, no. 3 (1999): 461–79.
17. See José A. Cobas and Joe Feagin, "Language Oppression and Resistance: The Case of Middle Class Latinos in the United States," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, forthcoming, 2008.
18. Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," in *White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism*, ed. Paula S. Rothenberg (New York: Worth Publishers, 2002): 97–102. The research of Tiffany Hogan and Julie Netzer is presented in: Joe R. Feagin, Hernán Vera, and Pinar Batur, *White Racism: The Basics*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 231.
19. See Debra Van Ausdale and Joe R. Feagin, *The First R: How Children Learn Race and Racism* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001).