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Looking for whiteness in the war on terror

Vron Ware

Abstract:

This essay addresses the links between routine, organised white supremacy and the “war on terror.” Beginning with an image of American soldiers torturing Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib, viewed in the context of the new museum of apartheid in South Africa, it demonstrates the entangled elements of white supremacy, colonialism, the spectre of global terrorism, and the New Imperialism of George W. Bush and Tony Blair. The essay stresses the importance of comparative work and cross-cultural, transnational exchange in the effort to analyse the reproduction of racist discourse on local, national and global scales. The second part explores the value of using whiteness as a concept to interpret local conflicts exacerbated by the fascist British National Party. It argues that racist violence and physical intimidation accompanies the activities of such groups however hard they try to disguise their underlying ideology. It also demonstrates the significance of gender discourse in Islamophobic propaganda.

In May 2004 I visited South Africa to take part in a conference on the first ten years of democracy. While I was in Johannesburg I took the opportunity to go

to the newly opened museum of apartheid, one of many new projects in the city helping to transform the substance of public culture. It is an amazing building and the museum itself has been designed with state of the art technology. Visitors enter by walking up a long outdoor passage, passing successive life size images of women, children and men representing the New South Africa. Immediately on entering the building you are offered the chance to read about each one as they tell a story of how their lives were shaped both by the apartheid regime and the civil war that ensured its subsequent defeat. After moving through a section about early colonial occupation of South Africa and the rise of Johannesburg as a mining town, you arrive at a display of the origins of the National Party, and the development of apartheid as a modernist political ideology. You can watch old TV footage of Verwoerd speaking reassuringly to all-white admirers, telling them that apartheid was really about good neighbourliness and learning to live together, before encountering the main section of the museum.

Here, room after room, panel after panel, screen after screen, offers extraordinary testimonies that stand as permanent record of what racial segregation sanctioned by law meant in practice. In the last hall there is a larger than life photograph of former President Nelson Mandela shaking hands with the captain of the country's victorious rugby team. It's impossible not to have passed through the museum without feeling both drained and exhilarated. In order to bring you back to the challenges of the present, however, there is a panel just near the exit that displays pages from the day's

newspapers. On the occasion of my visit, which happened shortly after the ghastly images of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib had been released, there was a lengthy article discussing the wretched Lynndie England whose active participation in sadistic torture of Iraqi captives had been shown all over the world.

That same day's display held other articles and column about the occupation of Iraq, an act that the South African government had vehemently opposed. Needless to say, this reminder of contemporary forms of racist barbarity brought one swiftly back to earth. Viewed in this political and cultural context, the atrocities at Abu Ghraib seemed depressingly familiar rather than shockingly unusual. Singling out Lynndie England, a pathetic figure seen by many observers as an easy scapegoat for her cowardly superiors, does not necessarily reveal the rationale and causes of this particular episode. But it is worth pausing over her position as a white working-class woman from the rural South of the US in order to think about what might be learned about the dynamics of colonial power. On one level England represents the contempt that US troops hold for their prisoners, for Iraqis in general, and the widespread abuse of human rights inherent in war and military occupation. Her gender can be made to demonstrate both the success of feminism in that she was a member of armed forces on the so-called front line, but it also underlines that being female does not guarantee immunity from abusing power, and so on. A more searching investigation into her whiteness at the time was immediately able to draw useful comparisons between England and that other visible white female combatant,

Jessica Lynch. Although both women came from West Virginia, the wretched figure of Lynndie England abusing Iraqi prisoners provided a convenient cipher for the articulation of a different variant of whiteness fractured by class. Her behaviour was easily dismissed as “white trash,” passed off by President Bush himself as “not the America” that he knew. One of the few media commentators who contrasted the way that the two young women’s fates were intertwined, journalist Gary Younge argued that that there was a connection between Lynndie England’s social status and the crimes of which she was accused.

Who they are is no defence for what they did. Indeed, who they are enabled what they did. It is one of the hallmarks of colonialism that the poorest, least powerful citizen of an occupying nation can wield enormous power in an occupied territory. A former chicken-plant worker like England can humiliate virtually any Iraqi she wants precisely and only because she is American in Iraq. Once she returns to America she reverts to the bottom of the pile.ⁱ

The US military, the missing link in this succinct analysis, responded by arresting the reservists who could be identified from the sadistic images, but only two senior officers were disciplined. The figure of former Brigadier General Janis Karpinski does not have the notoriety of England but her response to the way she was subsequently treated reveals more about the operations of class, gender and colonialism within the armed forces. As the officer responsible for Iraq’s chaotic prison system in early 2003, Karpinski was another easy target for scapegoating, but she did not go quietly. “The

abuses at Abu Ghraib" she wrote in her book 'One Woman's Army', "were the result of conflicting orders and confused standards extending from the military commanders in Iraq all the way to the summit of civilian leadership in Washington... The scandal has spread from Abu Ghraib to the far corners of Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay, involving military people, CIA agents and other people." ⁱⁱ

The horrible spectre of American soldiers torturing Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib, viewed in the context of the new museum of apartheid in South Africa, brought together the entangled elements of white supremacy, colonialism, the war on terror, and the New Imperialism of George W. Bush and Tony Blair. Analysing participants like England as more than just white Americans is an indication of how a more complex view of whiteness can produce a more useful diagnosis of power relationships than a crude condemnation of racism. The conjunction of national histories and broader geo-political shifts challenges us further to approach the study of white supremacy on a global scale. A transnational perspective is crucial, both as a context for focusing on local manifestations of racism, but also because of the insights that can derive from looking beyond national borders. Many of us have repeated the complaint that most of the current scholarship emanates from a highly myopic view of the US, a point that can perhaps be connected to its origins in the Cold War era. ⁱⁱⁱ This is not to denigrate the remarkable work on the national polity there, or on the choice to examine local forms of racial hierarchy and privilege, but rather to chafe at the assumption that this is how whiteness, or racial formation, works in general. You only have to look

up whiteness on the online encyclopedia Wikipedia to see how this field of study is commonly defined as a North American initiative.

Looking at a broader canvas of white supremacy in the world, George Frederickson^{iv} and John W. Cell^v have provided valuable comparative work on Jim Crow segregation and Apartheid. This historical work provides excellent context for exploring the different paths taken by each country in their post-liberation phase, building on the growing sociological literature on truth and reconciliation or assessing the short and long-term impact of affirmative action. Anthony W. Marx attempted a more global account of race-making in general and white supremacy in particular in his study, Making Race and Nation,^{vi} where he investigates the conditions that gave rise to different formations of racialised power in the United States, South Africa and Brazil, as well as addressing the general question: how is race made? By asking why Brasil did not suffer the degree of officially imposed segregation found in the United States after the abolition of slavery, or endure anything like the modernist project of Apartheid in South Africa, Marx undertook to identify the structures and ideologies of white supremacy in each place, showing the role of the state in determining the contours of racial identity and hierarchy. He argues that history itself is not enough of an explanation for the different ways that groups in each nation mobilized against state-sanctioned hierarchies of race and class. What was important was the way nationalists used and recast history to suit their own needs.

Marx focuses on two pivotal events that gave rise to Jim Crow segregation and Apartheid: the American Civil War (1862-5) and the Boer war

(1899-1902). In each case, the conflict between ethnically similar groups was won by the more liberal side: the British in the former and Northerners in the latter. Later, however, both groups instigated a racial order more reflective of their opponents. Although this general argument can be used to explain strategies of racial domination in such different countries, Marx found that Brazil presented an altogether different, though linked, pattern of development.

A "prefabricated" central state was in power when the winds of modernity hit. Abolition did raise the question of whether and how to incorporate blacks, but in the relative absence of major intrawhite conflict, there was little impetus to unify whites through racial exclusion. Whites were already relatively united: the nation was already bound up, at least among whites.^{vii}

The fact that Brazil experienced larger slave revolts meant that the ruling class was more fearful of blacks, and more eager to diffuse conflict between blacks and whites than their South African or U.S. counterparts. This did not mean that white supremacy was silenced but rather that it did not become enshrined in official policy. Rather than attempting to segregate the population on racial grounds, efforts were made to encourage miscegenation in order to "whiten" and unite the population. This policy had the effect of sustaining power structures that privileged those who could identify as whites at the expense of those who could not, without codifying the idea of race as a legal basis for collective political action, either for or against white supremacy.

This comparative framework makes it easier to trace the unstable borders of whiteness as a significant political, social and cultural category, and to show how these lines of demarcation are continually in dispute, jealously guarded, violently policed and routinely transgressed. This process has been painstakingly documented in the context of US history by David Roediger, who has done so much to shape a radical review of immigration. He made it clear from the start that he followed Du Bois' lead in examining the price that different ethnic groups paid for their inclusion into a white America – the psychological wages of whiteness. Matthew Frye Jacobson contributed to this valuable historiography by writing an analysis of whiteness as a political and cultural category: how it came to mean different things in terms of citizenship, national identity, and immigration discourse over a long sweep of US cultural history. His most recent work, Roots Too: white ethnic revival in post-civil rights America, continues this archaeology of national formation, focusing on the post civil rights era from the 1960s to 2001, during which Ellis Island replaced Plymouth Rock as the touchstone of national identity. Recognising the elemental career of white primacy as it has been articulated through the politics of nation-making - immigration and patriotism in particular - Jacobson demonstrates how the revived attachment to ethnic identities – the celebration of the hyphen – gave rise to new forms of inclusion and exclusion even as the potent mythology of the “nation of immigrants” continued to be celebrated. Although his research ends in 2001, his book concludes with a call to pay strict attention to “patterns in our collectivised sense of naturalized Americanness...These more than anything

else constitute the historical weave of that hypnotic political ideal, *America*.”

viii

I mention this book because it provides an example of politically engaged intellectual examination of white identity that can illuminate just how cultural shifts take place. It works in the context of the US, and is particularly relevant now as the movement of undocumented immigrants gathers pace. To do that job in other national contexts would require a different approach, tailored to local histories (including myths of origin) as well as regional or even global contexts. Making the connection between the consequences of racial supremacy and the yearning for collective identities has proved troubling for analysts of whiteness who are not prepared to undertake this patient and exhaustive historiographical labour. It has sometimes led to a defence of whiteness as a vital aspect of individual and group identity, one that is able to distance itself from the history of racial terror. Whiteness is thus misinterpreted as a fact of demography, nationality, social status, habitus, and culture.

Ghassan Hage’s work offers another example of the value of looking beyond national borders to make sense of contemporary debates on race and collective identity. He suggests that Australians habitually look to the US as a country that has dealt with and solved some of its own problems in relation to history of settlement and the genocide that accompanied it. He uses the term ‘White colonial paranoia’ to explain the structuring features of Australian nationalism since the country’s independence (federation) in 1901. Tracing it to the British colonial-settler mentality that justified the attempt to

eradicate the indigenous population, he describes this form of paranoia as a feature common to other colonial settler societies in the New World, notably the US and South Africa. Like these newer nations, he writes, "Australia's 'first world' wealth and democratic institutions are built on the decimation of the continent's Indigenous population and on the social, political and economic dispossession of those who remain. Theoretically, this ought to minimise the presence and effects of the paranoiac colonial sensibility one finds in colonial-settler nations that are in constant fear of decolonisation."^{ix} However, he continues, in spite of the fact that there is no serious movement to regain control of the country on the part of the Indigenous people, Australia does not share with the United States the "colonial *fait accompli*" confidence that permeates the latter's culture, and the indelible profile of White colonial paranoia has remained part of Australian culture long after the Indigenous population had been decimated:

'Paranoia' denotes here a pathological form of fear based on a conception of the self as excessively fragile, and constantly threatened. It also describes a tendency to perceive a threat where none exists, or, if one exists, to inflate its capacity to harm the self. The core element of Australia's colonial paranoia is a fear of loss of Europeanness or Whiteness and of the lifestyle and privileges that are seen to emanate directly from that. It is a combination of the fragility of White European colonial identity in general and the Australian situation in particular.^x

Hage's ethnographic and political work returns again and again to the overriding themes of worrying, hopelessness, and paranoia in Australian culture, offering useful insights into parallel work in other places where the apparent waning of racial privilege and the subsequent embracing of victim identity precipitate political formations that endanger fragile multicultures. Recent publications in the UK – I am thinking of Michael Collins' The Likes of Us: a biography of the white working class, published in 2004, and the more recent The New East End: Kinship, Race and Conflict by Geoff Dench, Kate Gavron and Michael Young, which draws on research in Tower Hamlets from the 1950s to the early 1990s – are examples of work that evoke a far more sympathetic view of the relationship between place, home, belonging, whiteness, and a collective sense of betrayal by those in power.^{xi} Collins' nostalgic conclusions that the glitzy transformation of cosmopolitan cities like London has been at the expense of indigenous white working class communities and culture overlaps with The New East End's pervasive message that a culture with an emphasis on citizens' rights and entitlement rather than consolidating community and mutuality has been achieved at enormous cost to 'the old working class'. Neither of these two books addresses how this racialised sense of disappointment and despair has fed into (and draws on) a wider discourse on British national identity after the end of empire.

It is important to engage with this type of argument, but suffice to say now that much of the research informing the conclusions of The New East End is already 15 years old, the project having been started in 1992. The

following year saw the election of the first member of the BNP in Britain, in ward in Tower Hamlets adjacent to Canary Wharf. Those who voted for the BNP gave specific reasons for doing so: many of which chime with research in The New East End. But in 2006 local elections there was not one BNP candidate in Tower Hamlets. Instead, they concentrated on a borough further east where they were able to gain unprecedented 11 seats. As their geographical base of support has shifted so has the context in which they find a sympathetic hearing. The lists of grievances propelling voters to support the BNP included a fierce resentment towards a new set of immigrants: Poles, Bosnians, Albanians, Kosovans, and Africans - producing tensions in relation to employment, housing, schools and crime, mixed with betrayal by a national Labour government that was supposed to represent working class interests. Add to this cumulative effects of the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, the attacks on London in July 2005, the closure of local industries with the loss of hundreds of jobs (from 25,000 to 3000), the rapid increase in outsourcing jobs, and expansion of the EU, and the phrase "white European colonial paranoia" is totally inadequate as a means to analyse the complex strands of insecurity, rage and despair that drive people towards racist political outlets. This is a situation that presents enormous challenge to researchers, not least an awareness of how terms of research can become part of the problem they are trying to emphasise.

In the second part of this essay I would like to focus on one particular episode, which I think helps to illustrate some of the problems and

possibilities of focusing on whiteness as a versatile analytical concept, a concept “good to think with”, that cuts across other forms of social division.^{xii}

In 2004 Channel Four ran a documentary to highlight changes in the law relating to the sexual exploitation of children in the UK, and to bring public attention to the practice of grooming as a new criminal offence. Angela Sinfield from Keighley, Yorkshire, whose daughter had previously been abused by a gang of local men, and who had helped to set up Families Against Child Exploitation, agreed to collaborate with the making of the film. She lent her services anonymously to the project which had the backing of the local MP Ann Cryer, whose support had been pivotal in changing the law. When the controversial documentary was aired, the British National Party immediately claimed responsibility for bringing the subject into the open, capitalising on the fact that many of the men involved in the Keighley gang were of Indian or Pakistani descent. This was the context in which the BNP leader, Nick Griffin, was later prosecuted (unsuccessfully, though he faces a retrial in October 2006) under the Race Relations Act for using words or behaviour likely to stir up racial hatred after claiming that the Qur’an incited Muslims to rape non-Muslim women:

"Their 'good book' tells them that that's acceptable. If you doubt it, go and buy a copy and you will find verse after verse saying you can take any woman you want as long as they're not Muslim. These 18, 19 and 25-year-old Asian Muslims are seducing and raping white girls in this town right now."

"It's part of their plan for conquering countries. They will expand into the rest of the UK as the last whites try and find their way to the sea. Vote

BNP so the British people really realise the evil of what these people have done to our country." ^{xiii}

Sinfield was horrified to find the BNP had used her name on a leaflet, and had quoted her as though she agreed with them, and supported their efforts to start their own group, "Mothers Against Paedophilia". She quick to dissociate herself, saying in one interview: "I have never met with Mr Griffin, I have never had anything to do with the BNP...They are not a political party, they are just a bunch of racists."

The truth is that a lot of these men are Asian men but I am not racist. It is about criminality." ^{xiv}

Sinfield's daughter Lucy, who was first abused by the local gang at the age of 12, and whose case became instrumental in changing the law whereby hearsay (where the child makes an admission to a third party) can now be considered evidence, also distanced herself immediately from the BNP: "They are just using it for their own racist agenda. They don't care about us. Griffin has no solutions to solving this issue." ^{xv}

The publicity surrounding the Channel Four programme and the BNP's attempts to exploit this issue propelled Keighley into the public eye once again, just three years after the riots in Bradford and surrounding area. The coalition of anti-fascist forces, including the local Labour Party, trade unions and community groups, decided to confront the controversy rather than play it down, since there were about 60 cases under review in which most of the men involved were indeed Asian. As a result of their counter campaign the BNP candidate, Nick Griffin himself, was defeated in the 2005

general election with only 9% of the vote, but the issue refused to disappear as it could be made to articulate a number of other local grievances – not least the fact that large amounts of money had been made available for local regeneration which inevitably led to accusations of unfairness in the way the funds were distributed. In March 2006 Angela Sinfield agreed to stand in a local by-election after the BNP councillor unexpectedly resigned.^{xvi} In the event, Sinfield won the seat with a majority over the BNP of 603 votes, and in the subsequent elections held two months later, the new Labour candidate held the seat, and the BNP won only two seats across the borough.

So how does a focus on whiteness help to unlock this extended and ongoing conflict? In my view, John Hartigan Jr. provides one of the most useful approaches to analysing racism within and between urban communities in his book Racial Situations.^{xvii} A social anthropologist, he used ethnographic methods to explore the “disparate and unstable interpretations of racial matters that people develop in the course of their daily lives.”^{xviii} He continues: “In order to think differently about race we need to pay attention to the local settings in which racial identities are actually articulated, reproduced, and contested, resisting the urge to draw abstract conclusions about blackness and whiteness.” Instead of asking his informants (drawn from different, predominantly white communities in Detroit) to dwell on their respective identities as racialised subjects, he focused more on how they made sense of immediate social divisions and episodes of racial conflict depending on local contingencies, as well as ideas and prejudices drawn from a broader cultural repertoire.

Hartigan's method can be used to connect the raft of issues that have produced social and political conflict in Keighley. Focusing on the local setting illuminates how racist discourse draws partly on people's interpretation of their own experience. This including genuine personal grievances as well as locally-sourced rumour and gossip. The enmeshing of sexual abuse and children solicits understandably powerful responses in any community but in this particular instance, the inescapable demographic facts, visible in the subsequent trial and convictions, meant that the identity of the majority of offenders was readily co-opted in the service of racist propaganda. A readiness to vilify "Asians" can be linked to the economic history of the surrounding area: the de-industrialisation of west Yorkshire, for example, and patterns of residential segregation built up during the 1970s and 80s, exacerbated by unemployment among younger generations in all communities.

Beyond these regional issues, the vaguer ideas and prejudices stemming from a broader cultural repertoire need close examination as well – whether it refers to deep strains of Powellite nationalism and xenophobia throughout the national consciousness, (at the risk of using an abstract term: White European colonial paranoia) or widespread insecurity caused by fear of terrorist attack, either from outside or from within. This repertoire casts vulnerable white women, girls as young as 11 or 12 in this case, as helpless victims of predatory sexual behaviour by foreign men, whose carnal appetites can be linked to their status as immigrants who are unable to integrate into the white working class communities where they live, and who are the main

beneficiaries of local urban regeneration. It provides seductive arguments that the predominance of Asian men in these criminal gangs reflects their deeply foreign and incompatible way of life, which they claim is superior to indigenous British culture because of the high premium placed on the morals of their own womenfolk. The fact that they were taking advantage of young English girls, endangering their lives and future prospects, was easily represented as a further index of the duplicity and hypocrisy of their uncivilised Muslim backgrounds. Exploiting this issue on behalf of local women was a convenient means to appear more of a pro-family, pro-women party, distancing themselves from street-fighting men.

Following on from this, the psychological and sexual abuse of English girls could be brought into line with the Muslims' hatred of British way of life and their determination to destroy it by "Islamifying" the national culture. The verb to Islamify is one used repeatedly by the BNP propaganda machine; this process is to be carried out by stealth in collaboration with the agents of multiculturalism and political correctness. Phil Edwards, the BNP's spokesman, was quoted as saying in the context of the Keighley campaign, "There is a problem with these people, with creeping Islamification of Britain. No one else will talk about these things and people who live in a democracy should have the right to have their concerns aired." ^{xix}

Finally, a more uplifting conclusion may be drawn from this episode in Yorkshire by examining the impact of Sinfield's courage - and her daughter's too - shown by their refusal to allow their own personal tragedy to be co-opted in the service of vicious and divisive racism. Their visibility, not

just as key victims, but as white women gave this choice a particular historical force. Sinfield's readiness to speak out as an aggrieved mother, dissociate herself from the racist campaign being waged in her family's name, and to enter public life for the good of the local community, conveys an ethical as well as a political statement about the possibility of turning away from hatred. Likewise, through her campaign to bring about changes in the law and her collaboration with Channel Four's attempt to publicise the issue she exemplified a far more constructive, hopeful and collaborative response. Her stand can be connected to a history of refusing to accept the dubious privileges and entitlements that are supposed to flow from counting as white, choosing instead alignments based on ethical solidarity and moral standards.

This brief analysis of a "racial situation" and the complicated strands that provide local interpretive frameworks for understanding cultural conflict, have so far focused on activities of BNP. I do not want to overemphasise their importance, but they act as a valve – first for activists psychologically or ideologically drawn to fascism, and secondly, more worryingly, to an electorate motivated by despair and comforted by racist propaganda that appears to articulate their multiple grievances.^{xx} Their limited ability to act effectively in public office is small consolation when a recent survey showed that a majority of British people supported BNP policies, even though a significant number were prepared to disown the policies once they were informed of the association.^{xxi} The recent success of the BNP requires close examination, not least because of their disinformation tactics designed to demonise asylum seekers, whether African or Albanian,

and to exacerbate fear and ignorance. Looking outside the UK it is clear that these patterns are reproduced across Europe, including the former Soviet Union.

Asking what happens when significant numbers are drawn to supporting white supremacist organisations returns us directly to the subject of terror. Racist violence and physical intimidation accompanies the activities of such groups whether they are successful at the polls or not, and however hard they try to disguise their underlying ideology. I want to stress two points: first the importance of comparative work and cross-cultural, transnational exchange as we endeavour to analyse the reproduction of racist discourse on local, national and global scales; and second, that in doing so, this work makes central the possibility of undoing whiteness by refusing to be complicit in the racism carried out in the name of defending “civilisation.”

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(vron.ware@gmail.com)

ⁱ Gary Younge ‘Blame the White Trash’ The Guardian Monday May 17, 2004.

ⁱⁱ Susan Taylor Martin, “Unravel scandal? It’s rough just to get one record” St Petersburg Times Senior Correspondent, Published November 27, 2005

http://www.sptimes.com/2005/11/27/Columns/Unravel_scandal_It_s_.shtml

ⁱⁱⁱ See the discussion on knowledge production in US universities in Caren Kaplan and Inderpal Grewal, “Transnational Practices and Interdisciplinary

Scholarship: Refiguring Women's and Gender Studies" in Robyn Wiegman Ed. Women's Studies on its Own (Durham NC and London, Duke University Press 2002).

^{iv} George Frederickson White Supremacy: A Comparative Study on American and South African History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981)

^v John.W. Cell The Highest Stage of White Supremacy : the Origins of Segregation in South Africa and the American South (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

^{vi} Anthony W. Marx Making Race and Nation: a Comparison of the United States, South Africa and Brazil (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

^{vii} Ibid, p. 15.

^{viii} Matthew Frye Jacobson Roots Too: white ethnic revival in post-civil rights America, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2006). He writes:

"Historiography, we know, is a presentist pursuit; the biggest game it is after is never simply "the past" but a usable past. If the period from the 1960s to the early 2000s is not yet distant enough to qualify as "history," then it is still worth highlighting some obscured political patterns and trying to crack some of the culture's unacknowledged codes, because a more usable present wouldn't be such a bad thing."(10)

^{ix} Ghassan Hage Against Paranoid Nationalism: Searching for Hope in a Shrinking Society (London: Merlin, 2003), p. 48.

^x Ibid, p. 49.

^{xi} Michael Collins The Likes of Us: a Biography of the White Working Class, (London, Granta 2004); Geoff Dench, Kate Gavron and Michael Young, Eds. The New East End: Kinship, Race and Conflict (London, Profile Books, 2006).

^{xii} Stuart Hall and Paul de Gay, Eds. Questions of Cultural Identity (London, Sage, 1996), p.1.

^{xiii} Martin Wainwright 'BNP leader 'claimed Qur'an allows rape of non-Muslims' The Guardian, Wednesday January 18, 2006.

^{xiv} Nick Lowles "Keep out of our campaign - Furious mother attacks BNP for exploiting her child" Searchlight, May 2005.

^{xv} Sinfield's daughter Lucy, who was first abused by the local gang at the age of 12, and whose case became instrumental in changing the law whereby hearsay (where the child makes an admission to a third party) can now be considered evidence, also distanced herself immediately from the BNP: "They are just using it for their own racist agenda. They don't care about us. Griffin has no solutions to solving this issue." Ibid.

^{xvi} Up to that point Keighley West had been the BNP's most secure council seat in the country. Two years ago it won 51% of the vote and it was considered as one of the party's heartlands. Anti-fascists were also mindful of the impact of the origins of the July 7th bombers from nearby Leeds, the more recent Danish cartoons controversy, and the photograph of a Muslim demonstrator wearing a suicide-bomber vest, all of which contributed to the BNP's ability to exacerbate hostility towards Muslims on both a local and national basis. Sinfield, who at one point thought she might be standing against her brother, a potential BNP candidate, revealed her embarrassment

at living in a town associated with the BNP: "I've never thought of myself as a politician, but why not stand up to these people? I'm a local woman, I know a lot of people and I know what damage the BNP are doing round here," she told The Guardian. The concerted campaign to face the issue of local criminality by dealing with the gravity of the offences but refusing to cast it in racist terms was felt to be central in the run up to the recent local elections, where the BNP were fielding over 400 candidates across the country. Ibid.

^{xvii} John Hartigan Jr. Racial Situations: Class Predicaments of Whiteness in Detroit (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

^{xviii} Ibid, 4.

^{xix} Matthew Taylor "Mother out to seize stronghold of 'unforgivable' BNP" The Guardian, Thursday March 23, 2006.

^{xx} The BNP saw unprecedented success in the local elections on May 4th 2006, winning 11 seats in one London borough, and making gains elsewhere (though not in Bradford. Keighley). Their message on national media was about asylum seekers bringing disease, tribal warfare, rape, again insinuated in election material tailored to particular constituencies where they attempt to exacerbate local anxieties and paranoia.

^{xxi} 'Most Britons support BNP policies' Press Association
Wednesday April 26, 2006 1:13 AM.