

TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF RIGHT-WING EXTREMIST VIOLENCE

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Abstract

This thesis presents an understanding of rhetorical and actual right-wing extremist violence present in the societies of post-bellum Europe and North America. In defining and focusing on what constitutes right-wing extremism as an ideology, it is possible to glean a clearer purpose to the violence of the extreme right, centred on what is believed and how. The relationship that right-wing extremism has to traditional religions and their extremist manifestations makes it possible to see two related but distinct purposes of right-wing extremist violence: at once, it functions as form of civic activism based on a particular understanding of politics and society; and it is part of a liturgy to a secular 'deity'. As a form of civic activism, right-wing extremist violence is used to fulfil a defensive and socio-political transformative agenda, focused around a sacralised community. Violence as rite serves to demonstrate loyalty, love and devotion, while protecting the community itself, along with communal and individual modes of identification experienced as central to being. Given that any attempt to understand the violence of the extreme right must accept its intentionality, how right-wing extremists justify and explain the purpose of their violence is an integral part of coming to this or any understanding. As such, right-wing extremist materials, in conjunction with theoretical frameworks laid out by academics, allow for an exploration of the purpose of right wing extremist violence that goes beyond seemingly facile explanations of hooliganism, blind hate or irrationality.

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Introduction

In 2004, Khursheva Sultonova was stabbed 11 times by a band of neo-Nazis in Russia and bled to death. She happened to be Tajik. She also happened to be nine years old. Her five-year-old compatriot, Nikufar Sangbaeva, did not fare much better than Khursheva when she was attacked with her family by skinheads. A member of Russian National Unity (RNE), one of Russia's most well-known extreme right organisations, had this to say about their deaths: "We must fight ethnic groups that threaten our state and destroy the Russian national culture... Unfortunately, we don't have a law that would allow us to take up weapons to fight this scum... Those Tajik girls should have stayed in Tajikistan... Tell me, where do all these uncontrollable blacks come from?"¹ Commonly understood as hate crimes, "criminal offences committed against a person or property that is motivated by an offender's hatred of someone because of their: race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality or national origin; religion; gender or gender identity; sexual orientation; disability"², acts of this nature are often attributed to and perpetrated by right-wing extremist groups like the RNE or individual affiliates. The incidents of xenophobic violence and the rhetoric that accompanies them in Europe and North America may not be considered statistically significant when taking into account the population size of a given country. Despite this, the threat posed to the social and political stability of communities that are host to right-wing extremism is grave enough to warrant monitoring and extensive research by academics and civil society. One has only to look at the amount of literature dedicated to Fascism, – the poster child of right-wing extremism – its various incarnations, programs like the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Programme on Tolerance and Non-

¹ Anna Badkhen, "A Gathering Storm of Russian Thugs", *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 14, 2005, <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2005/08/14/MNGUSE7N2D1.DTL> (last accessed May 8, 2010)

² United Kingdom, Home Office, *Hate Crime*, <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/reducing-crime/hate-crime/> (last accessed April 20, 2010)

Discrimination launched in 2004³ or the recent commitment by the OSCE's 56 member states to combat hate crimes through various forms of hate-speech or hate-crime legislation, to ascertain the continued social and political relevance of right-wing extremist violence, be it rhetorical or actual. Acts and responses to the violence of the extreme right, such as the ones above, beg several questions, including: what purpose does the violence of the extreme right serve and how does the violence of the extreme right justify itself? In answering these questions adequately, it behoves an explanation of how Nikufar and Khursheva's deaths could be taken not as tragedies, but as indispensable or laudable within the ideology of the extreme right. The goal of this thesis is to provide a deeper understanding of right-wing extremist violence, going beyond seemingly facile explanations of hooliganism, irrationality or blind hate.

In the liberal democracies of North America and Europe, extreme right groups are caustic social agents, having painted themselves as the answer to the failure of pluralist, liberal, and democratic values to make good on promises of social harmony and prosperity. If violence is the illegitimate or unauthorised use of force to effect change against the will or desire of others,⁴ one must assume that right-wing extremist do not see their use of force as illegitimate or unauthorised. Their desire to rend the social fabric of the societies they operate in and their aggressive chauvinism makes the violence they often employ anything but irrational or anarchic. The rationale behind the violence of the extreme right, its chauvinism and caustic nature cannot be abstracted from the belief system from it which it emanates. Consequentially, a basic understanding of what right-wing extremism entails as an ideology is necessary to understand the violence that often accompanies it.

³ Gert Weisskirchen, "Report to the OSCE Permanent Council", *Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe*, November 15, 2005, http://www.osce.org/documents/pr/2005/11/17031_en.pdf (last accessed May 27, 2010)

⁴ Robert Paul Wolff, "On Violence", *The Journal of Philosophy*, 66 no. 9 (Oct 1969), 606.

In the most basic sense, ideology is nothing more than the lens through which the world is understood; put more eloquently, ideology is “an interrelated set of convictions or assumptions that reduce the complexities of a particular slice of reality to easily comprehensible terms and suggests appropriate ways of dealing with that reality.”⁵ Despite the fact that there is nothing approaching a scholarly consensus on what constitutes the extreme right ideologically, it is possible to draw out several commonalities that are present in much of the related academic literature, manifestos and platforms of extreme right organisations and groups. It is not only in their reactionary character – a reaction to the failure of the values mentioned above - that the manifestations of the extreme right find common ground, but also in the idea that these manifestations are rooted in organised intolerance. The concept of organised intolerance opens the gateway for identifying many other similarities that might not be readily identifiable, namely, the extreme right as a reaction against neo-liberal social and economic change that discounts both communism and socialism as acceptable political and economic systems.⁶ This includes disdain for the pluralism that is endemic in most liberal democracies and the desire to ‘return’ to the ‘traditional’ social, religious and economic values of the nation or some other constituted community.⁷ Thus, for present purposes, the extreme right as an ideology, can loosely be identified by its primary concerns: renewal of the nation or primordial community; mitigation of the presence and influence of ‘foreign’ ideas and people that do not belong to the community and

⁵ Michael H. Hunt, “Ideology”, *Journal of American History*, 77 (June 1990), 108.

⁶ Sabrina P. Ramet, “Defining the Radical Right” in Sabrina P. Ramet (ed.) *The Radical Right: In Central and Eastern Europe since 1989* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 1999), 4, 6.

⁷ Ibid.

thus ‘destroy’ or ‘harm’ it; a belief in the need for a strong state; and addressing popular resentment for the social, political and intellectual elite.⁸

The organised intolerance of the extreme right hosts a congenital feature, that of violence, which plays a crucial role within its ideology.⁹ Discussions of the role of violence in the ideology of the extreme right are typically framed within discussions of fascism. Usually, fascist violence is presented in the form of militarism and social control, where violence serves as a form of mass mobilization: a means of social cohesion through collective action, a celebration of youth and the power of will as expressed in naked and brutal action;¹⁰ a redemptive tool to cleanse a community in decline and the means to achieve external expansion.¹¹ As the quintessential movement of the extreme right, one might be tempted to assume that fascist violence plays the same role and is of the same importance within this broader category of movements. While, it would be foolhardy to assert that fascist violence is not related to the violence of the extreme right, it would also be unwise to assume ipso facto that they are identical and violence for the fascist performs the same functions as violence within the general heading of the ‘extreme right’. Thus, any interpretation of the purpose of right-wing violence must be formulated in a manner that is porous enough to include the violence found within fascism – a political ideology with strong religious elements¹², but rigid enough to differentiate it from other forms of political violence originating from other ideological traditions.

This thesis is not an apologetics exercise for the violence of the extreme right, nor does it attempt to either refute or confirm the bulk of the research done on the right-wing extremism.

⁸ Ami Pedahzur and Leonard Weinberg, “Modern European Democracies and its Enemies: The threat of the Extreme Right”, *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 2 no. 1 (summer 2001), 62.

⁹ Bernt Hagtvet, “Right-wing extremism in Europe”, *Journal of Peace Research*, 31 no.3 (August 1994), 242.

¹⁰ George L. Mosse, “Genesis of Fascism”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol 1, no1 (1966), 18.

¹¹ Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (London: Penguin Publishing Ltd., 2005), 218.

¹² Moss, 17.

Instead, it seeks to use the existing research to frame the rhetorical and actual violence of the post-World War II extreme right movements within the perspective of three concepts: first, Emilio Gentile's 'sacralisation of politics' presents a particular view, where politics becomes a type of secular religion that expresses itself through the devotion to a secular entity, making it the incontrovertible source of meaning and the object which (should) direct(s) all human action; second, Mark Juergensmeyer's presentation of the violence and religious extremism within the political sphere and the intimate role violence plays within the body of and for individual religious adherents; and finally, Rene Girard's conception of sacrifice and mimetic desire which presents a novel understanding of the role violence plays within religion. Although Girard's theory of mimetic desire is most widely regarded for its explanation of how violence is so central to religion,¹³ the elegance of the theory and its implications have facilitated its use far beyond discussions of religious systems. The purpose of using these particular theoretical frameworks is to present two distinct but complimentary interpretations of right-wing extremist violence using materials, websites and blogs written for and by extremists themselves. On the one hand, the violence of the extreme right is expressed by extremists as a particular form of civic activism born out of (perceived) socio-political alienation; on the other hand, this violence can be examined through the lens of religion, where the violence is expressed as a necessary part of the liturgy for a secular 'deity', an ontological *alpha* and *omega*, who – for adherents authors and commands all of life's efforts.

In order to posit the purpose of right-wing extremist violence as a form of civic activism and as an integral part of the liturgy to a secular 'deity', this thesis will first present a working definition of right-wing extremism in Chapter one. By presenting a nominal definition of the

¹³ Mark Juergensmeyer, "Editor's Introduction: Is Symbolic Violence Related to Real Violence?", in *Violence and the Sacred in the Modern World*, ed. Mark Juergensmeyer (London: Frank Cass & Company Limited, 1992), 2.

extreme right that focuses not only on what is believed but how these beliefs are held, the features of the extreme right, like anti-pluralism and populism, take on a different form. The features function together to create a particular type of political community, where it alone becomes the incontrovertible source of meaning and the absolute standard for all things. Chapter two explores the relationship between religious fundamentalism and right-wing extremism. Using religious fundamentalism as a framework, it examines how the ideological features present within right-wing extremism are particularly suited to manifestations of violence. Focussing on the defensive and transformative aspects of the rhetorical and actual violence of the extreme right, Chapter three presents right-wing extremist violence as a form of civic activism, and Chapter four compares and contrasts fundamentalist religious violence with the violence of the extreme right. Presenting the ways in which these manifestations of violence are similar but also highlights how they are different, Chapter four continues by examining the application of Rene Girard's mimetic desire theory to right-wing extremist violence. Finally, the summarising chapter concludes by revisiting, the arguments presented and the implications of these interpretations of right-wing extremist violence are briefly discussed.

Chapter one: Literature Review & Definitions

Right-wing extremism has been used to describe political, sociological, psychological and often criminal phenomena. From football hooligans and anti-‘establishment’ political organisations, to population control policies and historical revisionism, right-wing extremism has transcended the parliamentary arena and its manifestations have been identified in many aspects of social life. The consequence of including a wide range of phenomena under one heading is twofold: firstly, it can lead to the dilution of the meaning to such an extent that the concept to the loses significance and becomes a self-serving, pejorative ascription; and second, there is a risk of reducing and rigifying the ascription by “deductively seeking an essentialist quality binding these phenomena.”¹⁴ The pharaonic volumes written on the subject reveal that right-wing extremism as a label is neither static nor precise. However, there are enough similarities between the different definitions to be able to nominally define the salient ideological components of right-wing extremism. It is not so much *what* the adherents to the ideology believe that is most important, but also *how* they believe must be taken into consideration as well. By presenting a nominal definition of the extreme right that focuses on what is believed and how these beliefs are held, a general discussion of right-wing extremism and its violence becomes possible. This allows for a collection of features to read into broader categories, while insisting that they function together within the concept. As opposed to the quantitative or qualitative methods of studying right-wing extremism, this ‘third method’ – a combination of the former two methods¹⁵, reduces the need to justify the choice of certain features over others, yielding a definition permeable enough to

¹⁴ Michi Ebata, “Right-Wing Extremism: In Search of a Definition”, in *The Extreme Right: Freedom and Security at Risk*, eds. Aurel Braun and Stephen Scheinberg (USA: Westview Press, 1997), 12.

¹⁵ Case Mudde, *The Ideology of the Extreme Right* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 11. Those preferring the quantitative approach deem all features as important and insist on the presence of all features to rightly ascribe something as ‘extreme right’. The qualitative approach prioritises the presence of one or more features, above others. The third approach mixes both approaches, where attributes are categorized and the extreme right ascription necessitates representation from the designated categories.

include various permutations of right-wing extremism and restrictive enough for the definition to remain significant.

Ideological components of the Extreme right

In a general political sense, the Left is characterised by progress whereas the Right is characterised by conservatism. Raab and Lipset underscore this distinction using power and privilege: “the preservatism of the right-wing has to do with maintaining or narrowing lines of power and privilege; the innovation of the left wing has to do with broadening lines of power and privilege.”¹⁶ Prefacing ‘right’ with the terms ‘radical’, ‘extreme’ or, less often, with ‘ultra’, have been used interchangeably to identify the narrowing of the lines of power and privilege, on the ‘far’ right of the Left-Right ideological spectrum¹⁷ that emerged in the twentieth century.¹⁸ The ‘radical right’ as a term is mostly used by authors working with the American tradition of extremism,¹⁹ while ‘extreme right’ remains the most common academic term to identify the ‘far right’ position on the political ideological spectrum.²⁰ The term ‘extreme right’ is also associated with violence, as well as with an intensity of beliefs that is particularly rigid.²¹

Throughout the existing literature, right-wing extremism has garnered a collection of ideological features, some which the authors hold in common and some which are unique to a particular definition: For example, Macridis defines right-wing extremism around the fail-safes of racism, xenophobia and nationalism, whereas, Backes and Jesse define right-wing extremism as “a collective term for anti-democratic dispositions and attempts that are traditionally

¹⁶Seymour Martine Lipset and Earl Raab, *Politics of unreason: Right-Wing Extremism in America 1790-1970* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1970), 19.

¹⁷ Ebata, 18.

¹⁸ Ramet, 4.

¹⁹ Mudde, 13. There is also a distinction between ‘radical’ and ‘extreme’ right within the German Basic Law that is not discussed here.

²⁰ Roger Eatwell, “Introduction: The New Extreme Right Challenge”, in *Western Democracies and the New Extreme Right Challenge*, eds. Roger Eatwell and Case Mudde (London: Routledge, 2004), 8.

²¹ Ibid.

positioned at the extreme ‘right’ of the left-right spectre.”²² Falter and Schumann itemise the contents of the extreme right as: extreme nationalism; ethnocentrism; anti-communism; anti-parliamentarism; anti-pluralism; militarism; law-and-order thinking; a demand for a strong political leader and/or executive; anti-Americanism; and cultural pessimism.²³ Case Mudde has calculated that of the twenty-six definitions of right-wing extremism that he had identified in the literature, “no less than fifty-eight different features are mentioned at least once.”²⁴ Five, he notes are mentioned by the majority of authors and have already been touched upon above: They are nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy and a strong state.²⁵

In placing the focus on defining the extreme right through the function of features rather than the features themselves, the danger of rigifying or diluting the concept is lessened. The definitions of right-wing extremism offered by Richard Stöss and Sabrina P. Ramet accomplish just that. Stöss has identified the following characteristics of right-wing extremism: exaggerated nationalism, involving hostile attitudes towards other states or people; a denial of the fundamental equality of human worth and of the universal application of human rights; a rejection of parliamentary pluralism based on the principle of majority rule; and “a folk-ethnocentric ideology.”²⁶ Ramet has also identified similar characteristics of the extreme right but her typology is slightly nuanced. For her, the extreme right is organised intolerance emerging from the cadre known since the French Revolution as the ‘Right’, which operates within: a cultural irrationalism that is inspired by intolerance of any one or thing defined as ‘outsider’ or ‘foreign’; a hostility to current notions of popular sovereignty or popular rule;²⁷ and

²² Mudde, 10.

²³ Mudde, 11.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ramet, 6

²⁷ Ibid, 5.

a neo-traditionalism driven by the preoccupation with protecting the ‘purity’ of collectivity which focuses on restoring the supposedly traditional values of the Nation or community and imposing them on the entire Nation or community.²⁸

The significant difference between Stöss and Ramet’s definitions is that Ramet’s conception of the extreme right places more of an emphasis on ‘traditional’ values of the Nation or the community rather than on nationalism itself.²⁹ Ramet’s conception allows for the intolerance of the extreme right to include hostility towards other states and people hailing from other states but also to include religious intolerance, xenophobia directed at co-nationals, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance that do not necessarily fit neatly within the phrase ‘exaggerated nationalism’. In preferring Ramet’s definition over others, right-wing extremism as a label can be applied to movements across time and across borders. Her definition is comprehensive enough to encompass seemingly disparate manifestations of right-wing extremism like Fascism, National Socialist parties of Russia³⁰, Canada³¹ and the United States³², the racist trans-national organisations of Blood and Honour,³³ violent groups like Britain’s Combat 18³⁴, and individual perpetrators of right-wing extremist violence, like James Von Brunn³⁵ or Artur Ryno and Pavel Skachevsky.³⁶ Her definition also allows right-wing extremism

²⁸ Ibid, 19-24

²⁹ Ibid, 6

³⁰ Russian National Socialist Party, http://www.nationalism.org/rnsp/display_ENG.htm (last accessed February 19, 2010).

³¹ National Socialist Party of Canada, <http://nspcanada.nfshost.com/index.php> (last accessed February 19, 2010).

³² National Socialist Movement, <http://www.nsm88.org/> (last accessed February 19, 2010).

³³ Ian Stuart, “Faith in Stuggle”, Blood and Honour, <http://www.bloodandhonour.com/articles/faithinstruggle.html> (last accessed February 19, 2010).

³⁴ Nick Lowles, “Ex Combat 18 Man Speaks Out”, *BBC News Panorama* <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/panorama/1672100.stm> (last accessed February 19, 2010).

³⁵ Bob Orr, “Shooting Highlights Growth of Hate Groups”, CBS June 1, 2009, Evening News Section, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/06/10/eveningnews/main5079442.shtml?tag=topHome;topStories> (last accessed February 19, 2010).

³⁶ Luke Harding, “Putin’s Worst Nightmare”, *The Guardian*, February 8, 2009 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/feb/08/russia-race> (last accessed February 19, 2010)

to emerge as a compound concept, in that it contains both the elements of conservatism found on the ‘far right’ of the political spectrum and the characteristics of ‘extremism’. The features she mentions - hostility to popular conceptions of sovereignty and rule, the cultural intolerance and neo-traditionalism, easily encompass the racism, xenophobia, nationalism and etatism mentioned by other authors as components of right-wing ideology. As pointed out by Gusfield below, the desire to impose neo-traditionalist values and the preoccupation with protecting the community from supposedly corrupting influences touches upon the nature of extremism as a concept:

Extremism consists in going to an extreme in zealous attachment to a particular value, e.g., private property, ethnic homogeneity, or status equality. (...) The extremist must be deeply alienated from the complex of rules which keep the strivings for various values in restraint and balance. (...) Its hostility is incompatible with that freedom from intense emotion which pluralistic politics needs for its prosperity... The focus of the extremists attention on one or a few completely fulfilled values and his impatience with compromise when a plurality of values, never internally consistent, have to be reconciled with each other makes the extremist feel that he is worlds apart from the compromising moderates.³⁷

Right-Wing Extremism and Violence

Ramet's explanation of extremism fails to explicitly note how or why right-wing extremism is violent, although her description of the ideology easily lends itself to extrapolation. Other authors have proffered explanations for the violence of the extreme right, presented through the genesis of extreme right movements, which are generally separated into four levels of analysis. The psychological theorists, like Adorno and Rokeach, predicate their assumptions on the existence of personality attributes that make the individual and by extension social groups, more receptive to right-wing ideas. Right-wing extremism's out-group prejudice is presented as an individual's psychological malaise that is hinged on cognitive rigidity.³⁸ The cognitive

³⁷ Joseph R. Gusfield, "Mass Society and Extremist Politics", American Sociological Review, vol 27 no. 1 (February 1962)22 accessed from www.jstor.org/stable/2089715 August 15, 2008

³⁸ Ebata, 19, in Michael Billig *Ideology and Social Psychology: Extremism, Moderation and Contradiction* (New York: Saint Martin's press, 1982), 103

rigidity stems from “the need for defensive ascription enabling people to protect their own sense of self-esteem and to justify their own apparent failings”.³⁹ Within this framework, violent behaviours, patterns of thought and beliefs exhibited by right-wing extremists are caused by psychological disturbances, which imply an inability for the extremist to cope in a more normative fashion; thus, the violence exhibited by the extreme right is rooted in a form of collective psychosis.

For socio-economic theorists like Raab and Lipset, right-wing extremism exists against the backdrop of economic and social changes that have “resulted in the displacement of some population groups from former positions of dominance.”⁴⁰ In this vein, Hagtvert and Kornhauser note that where economic or cultural conditions shift rapidly and unevenly, economically vulnerable segments of a population perceive other segments as rivals over scarce social and economic resources.⁴¹ Increased social and economic competition creates a pool of dispossessed individuals who respond to promises of restoring the past and the elimination of “structurally-induced” social tensions.⁴² Some authors focus less on the actual loss of status, be it economical or social, and more on the “perception of loss and the accompanying feelings of threat.”⁴³ From this perspective, the extreme right and its violence are a backlash reaction and a venting of social and economic frustrations that is focused on other socio-economic contenders.

Similarly, political theorists explain the presence and activity of the extreme right as public dissatisfaction with the political system as a whole, disillusionment with political actors, functioning institutions and democracy. The various elements of the extreme right position themselves as political outsiders who have not succumbed to the corrupting effects of the

³⁹ Ebata, 23, in Billing, 61

⁴⁰ Ibid 25, from Lipset and Raab , 485

⁴¹ Bernt Hagtvert, 243; William Kornhauser, *Politics of Mass Society* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1959)142-158

⁴² Ebata, 24

⁴³ Ibid, 25

established political culture that no longer has its finger on the social pulse of the country. The growing political and social presence of the extreme right is seen as an expression of opposition to the government or dissatisfaction with the performances of the usual suspects who compete for power and influence within a society.⁴⁴

International theories combine aspects of the psychological, socio-economic and political levels of analysis. In the larger contexts of economic and cultural globalisation, social fragmentation, the erosion of state sovereignty due to interdependence, and dissolution of traditional modes of social ascription produce feelings of instability and insecurity for many people.⁴⁵ Right-wing extremism is a reaction against a changing world perceived to be headed in the wrong direction, fuelled by a crisis of disillusionment and despair regarding the modern condition that permeates many societies.⁴⁶

It is clear that no one level of analysis can adequately explain the purpose of right-wing extremist violence on its own; each points to a different element of right-wing extremism that makes violence a possible option for the extremist to bring about social or economic change but none begins to explain the purpose of right-wing extremist violence. Unlike the four levels of analysis presented above, William Kornhauser presents the violence of the extreme right as an expression of popular will, which can encompass violence as a rejection of socio-economic realities, but also as a form of civic activism. His theory is widely used in the discussions of right-wing extremism, particularly to explain how its movements emerge and to link violence within the ideology of right-wing extremism.⁴⁷ Although these authors use various parts of

⁴⁴ Ibid, 27-28

⁴⁵ Ibid, 28

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ See Lipset and Raab, 6; Leonard Weingberg, "An Overview of Right-Wing Extremism in the Western World: A Study of Convergence, Linkage and Identity" in Jeffery Kaplan and Tore Bjørgo (eds) *Nation and Race: The Developing Euro-American Racist Subculture* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998) 6; Michael Minkenberg, "The West European Radical Right as a Collective Actor: Modeling the Impact of Cultural and

Korhauser's theory to make their respective points, and others have taken issue with many assertions he makes, it stands that his theory is still useful in understanding how violence has become a defining trait for the extreme right.

In his seminal work, *The Politics of Mass society*, Kornhauser presents the basic presupposition that all societies – including liberal, pluralistic democracies - contain some strata(s) of society that will be more alienated and unplugged from the larger social and political order than others at given times.⁴⁸ For some, this alienation in turn heightens their responsiveness to extremist or mass movements that: “provide the occasions for expressing resentment against what is, as well as promises of a totally different world”;⁴⁹ target symbols, events and issues;⁵⁰ and are centered around a specific program, purpose or purposes.⁵¹ These types of movements are characterised by an insistence on cultural uniformity that becomes politicised through populism, where primacy is given to “the belief in the intrinsic and immediate validity of the popular will.”⁵² The uniform opinion of the mass becomes the ‘law of the land’, superordinate to institutional autonomy, professional standards or expertise and existing social values. The exclusionary populism of mass movements views dissent as illegitimate since it departs from the popular will. Thus, mass movements lack strong cultural support for the defence of autonomous political institutions, the likes of which are the cornerstones of liberal democracy.⁵³

Structural Variables on Party Formation and Movement Mobilization”, *Comparative European Politics* 1, no. 2 (July, 2003), accessed from <http://proquest.umi.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/pqdlink?did=388393091&Fmt=7&clientId=12520&RQT=309&VName=PQD> January 13, 2010

⁴⁸ Kornhauser, 228

⁴⁹ Ibid, 32.

⁵⁰ Ibid 44

⁵¹ Ibid, 47

⁵² Ibid, 103.

⁵³ Ibid.

The insistence on cultural uniformity and the primacy of popular opinion, in addition to some degree of social alienation, cause mass movements to have a “weakened commitment” to upholding existing political norms and institutions that govern political activity, discussion and conflict.⁵⁴ Instead, mass movements interact directly with the polity, unmitigated by institutions or political norms. This unmitigated political interaction is what Kornhauser has termed mass politics and it occurs when a large group of people, like in a mass movement, engages “in political activity outside of the procedures and rules instituted by a society to govern political action.”⁵⁵ Mass politics, as exemplified by Fascism⁵⁶, is

associated with activist interpretations of democracy and with increasing reliance on force to resolve social conflict... the breakdown of normal restraints, including internalized standards of right conduct, and established channels of action... frees the mass to engage in direct, unmediated efforts to achieve its goals and to lay hands upon the most readily accessible instruments of action.⁵⁷

He continues that in pluralistic democratic societies, the population participates in pre-defined ways and means and does not resort to ad hoc methods of pressure to achieve their goal. Even when citizens participate in pressure tactics like unlimited general strikes, protests, hard picket lines and so on, majority choice, minority rights, public discussion and the principles of free competition are not sacrificed wholesale for the achievement of their goals.⁵⁸ When a mass movement engages in mass politics, breaking with the normative patterns of pluralist political behaviours within a democracy, the movement itself and its style of politics is anti-democratic:⁵⁹ it insists on uniformity of culture, opinion and behaviour, thus impairing pluralism and the culture of democratic discussion; it will carry out social and economic conflict outside of

⁵⁴ Gusfield, 23.

⁵⁵ Kornhauser, 227.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Kornhauser, 45, taken from Selznik, *Organizational Weapon*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1952), pp293-4

⁵⁸ Ibid, 46.

⁵⁹ Kornhauser, 227.

political institutions – engage in rhetorical and actual violence, thus denying the legitimacy of democratic political institutions, and the norms that govern them, as the sole legitimate means of mediating political conflict; and it seeks to close the political process to opposing forces, because it does not see opposition as legitimate.⁶⁰

The rhetorical and actual violence employed by the extreme right can be interpreted as a form of civic activism; it is intentional action that attempts to bring about social and political change based on the collectivity's will. In this respect, the rhetorical and actual violence of the extreme right is more than just a reaction to socio-economic changes or a manifestation of collective psychosis or hooliganism. It is a means of persuasion, coercion, an arbiter of disputes and a defensive tool against any obstacle that might prevent the realisation of the collective will or that breaks with the uniform collective culture. In short, the violence of the extreme right is a particular style of conducting politics that emanates from a particular understanding of politics and society.

⁶⁰ Gunsfield, 23.

Chapter two: Religious Aspects of Right-wing extremism

Both Ramet's nominal definition of right-wing extremism and Kornhauser's explanation of right-wing extremist violence reveal right-wing extremism as a particular dichotomous understanding of how society and politics should be organised. Raab and Lipset explain this dichotomy through the moralistic and monistic nature of right-wing extremism, two features that often appear together.⁶¹ Its moralism expresses itself through the needed division of right and good or wrong and evil, including historically, where human events are solely shaped by the supremacy of good intentions over bad at any given moment, or vice versa. Monism expresses itself through procedural extremism, where dissent, cleavages and ambivalence are treated as evil and thus, illegitimate. Within right-wing extremism, there exists one popular voice – that of the extremists – which alone has the legitimacy to dictate the one culture, one set of values, mores, beliefs and the sole means of governing that is appropriate for the 'good' of the community. Thus, the "will of the people as such is supreme over every other standard, over the standards of traditional institutions, over the autonomy of institutions and over the will of other strata. Populism identifies the will of the people with justice and morality."⁶² The 'will of the people', that is, the final arbiter on all things just and moral, confers on itself something more than just a measure of mysticism or ethereality. It becomes justice and morality itself, everything good: "It is not just public opinion on this issue or that; it is the soul of the people, the unfathomable – and unmeasured – sweep of their aspirations toward the good and the true. Conversely, it can be assumed that whatever is good and true is the people's will".⁶³ It follows, that if the 'will of the people' is good, true and just, then the people themselves, must also share these characteristics. From the perspective of the extremist, politics cannot be the competition for power where

⁶¹ Lipset and Raab, 6 & 11,13

⁶² Lipset and Raab, 13, taken from Edward A. Shils, *The Torment of Secrecy* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1956), 98.

⁶³ Ibid.

disagreement over its uses is mediated by universal norms, but instead becomes a battle against the forces of good, represented by the community and its will, against the forces of evil, which work against the interests and the will of the community. The primary purpose of politics for the right-wing extremist is the implementation of its ethical rules, moral principles and what is regarded as ‘fundamental truth’, embodied in and enunciated by the community. As “every political issue is a doctrinal struggle between good and evil... and there is only one revealed path to salvation”⁶⁴, politics is sacralised.

Religious nature of Right-wing extremism

The dualism and monism of right-wing extremism provide it with characteristics that are very similar to that of a traditional religion and consequently, religious fundamentalism. Where religion can be understood as “a collection of beliefs, symbols and rituals with respect to sacred things and institutionalized in a collectivity”⁶⁵, right-wing extremism can be understood in the same manner, despite its secular nature. Within the various manifestations of right-wing extremism are a social set of “interrelated convictions or assumptions”, with their own symbols - for example, Nazi emblems, bombers jackets, flags, heroes, and rituals, such as observance of national holidays and historical events, heroes’ birthdays, salutes, songs. Both of these are centered around the ‘sacred’ community or collectivity and are institutionalised within the same body of extremists. The assertion here is not that right-wing extremism is a religion, but neither is it purely political. Right-wing extremism is what Gentile refers to as type of sacralisation of politics, or a religion of politics that exists in the political rather than religious realm and is independent from traditional religion.⁶⁶ A religion of politics is born when particular political

⁶⁴ Ibid, 12

⁶⁵ Emilio Gentile, *Politics as Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 2 from Robert Bellah, “Civil Religion in America,” *Daedalus*, 1, 1967, p1-21

⁶⁶ Gentile, xvi

entity, such as, a nation, state, race, class, party or movement, is transformed into a sacred entity that is

transcendent, unchangeable and intangible. As such, it becomes the core of an elaborate system of beliefs, myths, values, commandments, rituals, and symbols, and consequently an object of faith, reverence veneration, loyalty, and devotion, for which, if necessary, people are willing to sacrifice their lives.⁶⁷

When a religion of politics is exclusive and fundamentalist, “founded on an unchallengeable monopoly of power, ideological monism and the obligatory and unconditional subordination of the individual and the collectivity to its code of commandments”⁶⁸, it becomes a specific form of political sacralisation, known as a political religion. While Gentile highlights Fascism, along with Nazism and bolshevism as manifestations of political religions in the Modern Era,⁶⁹ the exclusive, fundamentalist, popular and monistic nature of post-bellum right-wing extremism in North America and Europe discussed above, fits comfortably within his definition of political religions.

Political religions are different than the politicisation of religion, exemplified by the various fundamentalist religious movements that attempt to take power in order to impose their own religious principles on a given society or state.⁷⁰ Though different, there exists a relationship between religions of politics and traditional religions. Religions of politics mimic the dominant traditional religion’s way of “developing and representing a system of beliefs and myths, defining dogma and ethics, and structuring liturgy”⁷¹. The relationship is also syncretic since religions of politics will adopt the traditions, myths and rituals of the traditional religion to its own mythical and symbolic universe. The relationship between political religions and

⁶⁷ Gentile, xiv.

⁶⁸ Ibid, Xv, 140.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 33-44.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 141-142.

⁷¹ Ibid, 141; Gentile also says that the relationship is short-lived given the majority of historical cases he has examined.

traditional religions is much the same: political religions don the trappings belonging to the dominant religion (myths, rituals, and sacred texts) while adapting and modifying these to their own purposes. Despite the syncretic and mimetic relationship between religions of politics and traditional religions, political religions do not suffer the primacy of any other dogma but their own and do not function like traditional religions in the political sphere. In relation to traditional religions and their institutions, a political religion “adopts a hostile attitude and aims to eliminate them, or it attempts to establish a rapport of symbiotic coexistence by incorporating the traditional religion into its own system of beliefs and myths while reducing it to a subordinate and auxiliary role;”⁷² its political modus operandi mirrors that of religious extremist movements, who tend to be violent as well.⁷³

Religious Extremist violence in the Political sphere

Like the extreme right, religious fundamentalism is neo-traditionalist in its quest to maintain a pure collectivity; it is a “specifiable pattern of religious militancy by which self-styled true believers attempt to arrest the erosion of religious identity, fortify the borders of the religious community and create an alternative to secular structures and processes.”⁷⁴ Similarly, John H. Garvey notes three traits common to different types of religious fundamentalism that are also analogous to characteristics of right-wing extremism identified above.⁷⁵ Religious fundamentalism is (neo-) **conservative**, as it strives to conserve a particular religious heritage. He states that it is not coincidental that the religious traditions and ‘traditional values’ that

⁷² Ibid, 140. See also xvi.

⁷³ Ibid, xvii

⁷⁴ Appleby, R. Scott “The Promise of Internal Pluralism: Human Rights and Religious Mission” in R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred* (New York, Rowman & Littlefield), 2000, 86

⁷⁵ John F Garvey, “Introduction: Fundamentalism and Politics,” in M.E. Marty and R.S. Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Politics, Economies, and Militance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 13-17.

fundamentalism endeavours to preserve antedate the public/private distinction; Doctrinal simplicity, scriptural literalism and a non-hierarchical style make fundamentalism **popular** - in the sense that the ‘fundamentals’ of the religion made are accessible to theologians and non-specialists alike; The popular and conservative nature of fundamentalism lead it towards orthopraxy rather than orthodoxy, where **practical** matters – matters of practice – are insisted upon rather than doctrinal exegesis, since an adherent would have already accepted the fundamentals of the religion.

There is nothing in the above description that would lead one to assume that religious fundamentalism is inherently violent. Indeed, there are those who could be classified as fundamentalists but repudiate violence.⁷⁶ Considering that religious fundamentalism is a particular “world view or a paradigm of thinking that ‘defines the conditions... of all knowledge’”,⁷⁷ it is in the fundamentalist world view that one will find the answer to the question of where the violence of religious fundamentalism comes from and how this violence is related to the moralism and monism of religious fundamentalism. Appleby explains fundamentalist religious violence through religious dualism within an apocalyptic framework; fundamentalists see the world divided into the “unambiguous realms of light and darkness peopled by the elect and reprobate, the pure and impure, the orthodox and the infidel”.⁷⁸ They also see themselves as living in a time of exceptional danger and of crisis which, in many religious traditions, is the advent for a ‘Last Judgement’ of sorts, where “God will bring terrible judgement of the children of darkness.” The exceptional nature of the times, filled with extraordinary dangers for the fundamentalist and the impending Last Judgement, allows them a

⁷⁶ Scott, 86-87.

⁷⁷ Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror and the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) 13, taken from Michel Foucault, *the Order of things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1973), 168.

⁷⁸ Scott, 87.

special dispensation to depart from the ‘normal’ peaceful natures of their specific religious traditions. Here, violence is used by religious extremists as a defensive tool to protect the community of the faithful from the evils of perilous times and, in some cases, as tools of God’s Divine Retribution.⁷⁹

Garvey roots the violence of religious fundamentalism in the rejection of the public/private distinction and the belief that God not only deals with the faithful spiritually, but also is active within the temporal realm⁸⁰ One typical pattern of Divine actions that fundamentalists interpret as the works of God, is “God’s choice of a certain group of people as his own.”⁸¹ The chosen people are chastised or favoured, visited with disaster or miraculously preserved from calamity, according to their faithfulness judged in part by adherence to religious tenets, mores and codes of conduct. The direction of history, as planned by God, is the other pattern that fundamentalists have discerned, expressed through the traditions of millenarianism.⁸² Social and political events or occurrences are not value neutral, but take on a deeper normative meaning. Epidemics, famine, rampant social ills or military defeat, and the like, are interpreted as consequences for departing from the ‘Will of God’. These may also signal the advent of the millenarian age of human history, both of which are derived from and laid out in sacred texts and religious traditions. These beliefs have significant implications for politics, particularly when fundamentalist movements become politically active. Religious fundamentalists do not see politics, or the laws that govern it, as a useful tool for the maintenance of social order or peace

⁷⁹ Throughout this thesis ‘divine’ has been capitalised in order to denote a specific and non-general usage that entails the personification a deity within a religious paradigm. The use of ‘divine’ followed by the capitalisation of other terms is used to denote the same.

⁸⁰ Garvey, 17

⁸¹ Ibid, 18

⁸² Ibid.

unless it is based on the laws of God.⁸³ The insistence on the use of religious texts – a written account of Divine Will, as the basis for laws and the conduct of politics is not only a rejection of the separation of religious authority and the state power, “which directs that the public sphere must be kept secular”, but it is also the insistence on the abolishment of the private sphere, which could lead to a violation of the secular understanding of personal rights and freedoms.⁸⁴ Using Salman Rushdie as an example, Garvey points out that because God’s law imposes strict penalties for the sins of apostasy and blasphemy, an individual who changes their religious beliefs and/or expresses insulting opinions about matters of faith, cannot do so without fearing government reprisal.⁸⁵ Religious fundamentalists who are not adverse to the use of violence – religious extremists, will do so when there is a threat of change or a change to the social standing/ranking of the ‘chosen’ religious community, like the Sunni Muslims in Pakistan, the Sikhs in Punjab or the Free Presbyterians in Ulster; and when the government tries to enlarge the private sphere, hampering the fundamentalists’ ability to establish the laws of God as the law of the land,⁸⁶ thus making the society as a whole a target for Divine chastening or punishment. Within this explanation of religious fundamentalist violence, violence is not only a tool to preserve the social standing of the religious community or to return to the social status quo. It is also a means to bring about social transformation, based on a specific interpretation of religious texts or traditions and through this the community would be restored to its ‘rightful place’.

Juergensmeyer roots the violence of fundamentalism within a particular mindset, inspired by the violent mythologies of religion and the violent past of history. The images of divine warfare are regular fare within the heritage of religious traditions, stretching back to antiquity

⁸³ Ibid, 19.

⁸⁴ Ibid

⁸⁵ Ibid 19-20.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 20

and within sacred text themselves. These images are part of what he terms the ‘script of cosmic war’; cosmic because they are larger than life and “they relate to the metaphysical conflicts between good and evil.”⁸⁷ Religious fundamentalist violence is born out of this notion of cosmic war, where political issues and secular battles are placed within the grand narratives of Good versus Evil found in religious traditions.⁸⁸ Without being explicit as Juergensmeyer, Garvey and Appleby’s explanations of the origins of fundamentalist religious violence also touch upon the belief that the divine battle between Good and Evil has and will continue to manifest itself in the temporal realm, and that the faithful are duty bound to participate in this fight, spiritually as well as actively. Put differently, the forces of Good and Evil manifest themselves through human action and ‘believers’ are the instruments of Good - as harbingers of Truth and Justice in addition to being instruments of Divine Retribution. Unlike the other conceptions of religious fundamentalist violence presented above, Juergensmeyer’s notion of the cosmic war encompasses their presentation of violence as defence of the ‘chosen’ religious community, as a tool of divine retribution, for the restoration of social status through social transformation and reveals this violence not only as a tactic in a larger political strategy, but also as a tool of empowerment, religious devotion, order and hope:

The idea of warfare implies more than an attitude; ultimately it is a world view and an assertion of power. To live in a state of war is to live in a world in which individuals know who they are, why they have suffered, by whose hand they have been humiliated, and at what expense they have persevered. The concept of war provides cosmology, history and eschatology and offers the reigns of political control... [I]t holds out the hope of victory and the means to achieve it... To be without such images of war is almost to be without hope itself.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Juergensmeyer, *Terror and the Mind of God*, 149.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 150.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 158

The Conspiracy Theory & The Script of Cosmic War

Through their moralism and monism, it is possible to note several similarities between religious extremism and right-wing extremism. Both systems of belief are extremely dualistic: people are categorised either as allies or foes, ‘believers’ or non-‘believers’, in-group or out-group; human action is either good or bad, just or unjust and inevitably, ideas, policies and politics itself, are divided in the same manner. Both also insist that their idealised vision of how society should be organised is the only way that their respective societies can be just, peaceful and prosperous. Religious extremism draws its authority to impose this vision from a particular interpretation of religious texts and select religious traditions, where right-wing extremism draws its authority from the ‘will of the people’. Violent religious fundamentalism, like right-wing extremism is hostile to popular notions of sovereignty and rule, insists on cultural uniformity and, resorts to violence in the name of protecting the ‘traditional values’ and purity of the collectivity. Both forms of extremism view themselves as the keepers of the traditions of the ‘hallowed’ past and possessing the means to restore the collectivity to its ‘former’ glory, what it was always ‘meant’ to be: They have the Truth, and they will die rather than fail to impose it.⁹⁰ Accordingly, they fit uncomfortably into the pluralistic and democratic societies of post-war Europe and North America that house them. Since political religions mimic religious extremist movements, two other features that are shared by religious and right-wing extremism are important to consider: the conspiracy theory as a secular type of cosmic war script, and the creation of an enemy.

Juergensmeyer has identified the ‘script of cosmic war’ as an ever-present and important feature within the paradigm of religious fundamentalism.⁹¹ He notes that the notion of ‘being at

⁹⁰ Gentile, 44, taken from H.J. Laski, *Reflections on the Revolution of our Time*, London 1943, 72.

⁹¹ Juergensmeyer, *Terror and the Mmind of God*, 150

war' is shared by fundamentalists hailing from diverse cultures⁹² and expresses itself in strikingly similar ways: the faithful are involved in a battle of Good versus Evil; the enemy is cunning and conniving; and, like a wolf in sheep's clothing, the enemy deceives the unsuspecting majority by disguising its true nature and final agenda.⁹³ Within this eschatological belief system, fundamentalism seizes "upon particular historical moments, matched to sacred texts and traditions, and interpreted according to an uncanny calculation of time and space."⁹⁴ An analogous mode of thought can also be found within the paradigm of right-wing extremism.⁹⁵ The conspiracy theory "represents a common theme linking extreme right-wing groups from different countries and linking them to pre-war fascism."⁹⁶ The conspiracy theory is a logical extension of the moralism of the extreme right, since history and social events are shaped solely by the supremacy of good intentions over bad or vice versa, social and political ills are not the results of mistakes or faulty thinking but the product of deliberate evil doing.⁹⁷

Just as the script of cosmic war allows religious fundamentalists to frame their struggle in a larger historical or mythological context across time and the space between the temporal and the celestial, the conspiracy theory allows right-wing extremists to do the same. The typical conspiracy theory espoused by right-wing extremists is comprehensive in its design: it extends through time, stretching back into history and will stretch ahead indeterminably and it extends across space, in that it is international in scope. The conspiracy theory is more than just an incredible theory, but a historical "revisionist enterprise" where purpose and intent to harm the

⁹² Ibid, 151

⁹³ Ibid, 152-157

⁹⁴ Martin E. Mary and R. Scott Appleby, "Conclusion: An Interim Report on a Hypothetical Family" in *Fundamentalisms Observed*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 819.

⁹⁵ Eatwell, 9.

⁹⁶ Ebata, 19, taken from Michael Billig, "The Extreme Right: Continuities in Anti-Semitic Conspiracy Theory in Post-War Europe" in Roger Eatwell and Noël O'Sullivan (eds.), *The Nature of the Right* (London: Pinter, 1989), 146-166.

⁹⁷ Lipset and Raab, 13.

collectivity link past historical events to present socio-political circumstances: “[i]t is not just that there is political collusion but that this collusion is the explanatory factor in understanding history.”⁹⁸

The tradition of anti-Semitic conspiratorial thought provides a great example of how conspiracy theories are comprehensive in design. One version of this particular type of conspiracy theory uses *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, supposedly written in the late 19th century, as proof that there is an ‘insidious cabal’ that has been plotting to take over the world by asserting control over the financial sector, the media, governments, businesses and other major industries.⁹⁹ According to a branch of this particular conspiracy theory, the Holocaust is a Zionist fabrication for a number of reasons: first, the estimated six million Jews that died is a figure that adherents claim cannot be supported scientifically, since there is circumstantial evidence and documentation that indicated the concentration camps did not purposefully kill detainees; second, the so-called myth of the six million victims created the necessary political and social conditions for the birth of the state of Israel, which would not have been possible or justifiable if it had been discovered that the death toll of the Holocaust was actually much lower; finally, the figure of six million – “six times ten raised to the sixth power” – is believed by adherents to be a fabricated number, as it contains the number 6, which they claim in Jewish numerology is a perfect number, as it represents the number of days God took to create the world in the book of Genesis.¹⁰⁰ Another offshoot of this anti-Semitic conspiracy theory posits that the current Roma ‘issues’ in Hungary – the perceived high birthrate and rate of ‘criminality’ compared to the national average, are biological weapons being used to destroy the

⁹⁸ Ibid, 14

⁹⁹ Ebata, 19

¹⁰⁰ “Frequently Asked Questions about The Holohoax”, *Aryan Nations Education Outreach*, <http://www.aryannations88.com/zog/holohoax.htm> (last accessed March 1, 2010)

Hungarian nation by the Hungarian ‘Zionist’ government.¹⁰¹ While the ‘Zionist’ conspiracy theory may be one of the most widely held and recognisable conspiracy theories of right-wing extremism, it is hardly the only one. William Guy Carr, states that it was the ‘Illuminati’ who orchestrated the death of Christ, provided the pieces of silver to bribe Judas and who used Communism “as their manual of action to further their secret places for ultimate world domination.”¹⁰² Throughout history, different conspiracy theories accuse different conspirators of authoring the plot to destroy the collectivity and often, of pursuing the objective of global domination.¹⁰³ Given the diversity of societies that are host to right-wing extremist movements and groups, it is not surprising that history and current social pathologies will colour the specifics of and around the conspiracy theory being espoused.

Another important element of the conspiracy theory is the “manipulation of the many by the few.”¹⁰⁴ Adherents believe that the majority of people are not accomplices or co-conspirators in the plot for global domination or the destruction of the collectivity. In the eyes of the extremist, the majority has been duped into believing the propaganda created out by the ‘plotters’ and do not suspect that anything is amiss. Only a select few, the extremists believe, know what is really ‘going’: how the evil plotters are going about fulfilling their agenda; who the enemy are and how they operate; how conventional thinking is actually propaganda created by the enemy to keep the majority ignorant. Functionally, the belief that the majority is ignorant to the nature and scope of the conspiracy is important. Firstly, it explains the particular populism of the extreme right and the primacy of their popular will over the will of the actual majority. If only

¹⁰¹ Peter Nemenyi, “Roma Question! What Roma Question?”, *Kuruc.info*, <http://kuruc.info/r/35/35747/> (last accessed June 8, 2010)

¹⁰² Lipset and Raab, 14, taken from William Guy Carr, *Pawns in the Game* (Toronto: National Federation of Christian Laymen, 1956), 13.

¹⁰³ Ebata, 19

¹⁰⁴ Lipset and Raab, 15.

the extremists are privy to the Truth, then only they are competent to decide what is best for the collectivity. Secondly, with an ignorant majority, the conspiracy theory becomes an important indoctrinating device.¹⁰⁵ Because the majority has been misled and are not willing participants in the ‘evil plot’, once introduced to and taught how the conspiracy works, the rightful members of the sacralised collectivity can join in the fight against ‘evil’ and for a ‘pure’ community.

The conspiracy theory, like the script of cosmic war, represents a unique way of understanding historic events and their relationship to current political and social issues. The conspiracy theory provides the framework in which right-wing extremism positions its goals and struggles within the interminable battle between Good and Evil. It is a means through which the extreme right can justify and explain its failures and confer “upon its successes an even weightier import.”¹⁰⁶ The comprehensive design of the conspiracy theory and the fact that many are ‘ignorant’ of its existence, makes the right-wing extremist movements much like the religious fundamentalist movements, in that they are a group of self-styled true believers with the exclusive knowledge of how to protect the collectivity from impending destruction.

Within any battle narrative there are heroes and, more importantly, there are foes. There must be antagonists great enough in power and strength to author a considerable amount of chaos and mayhem while doing battle against the forces of Good. Just as religious fundamentalists read themselves and their struggles into the script of the cosmic war on the side of Good, those that resist their efforts or oppose them are scripted as agents of Evil. Religious traditions along with a “dramatic and dualistic readings of sacred texts” provide the religious fundamentalist with a highly stylised depiction of the cosmic enemy.¹⁰⁷ Within the Christian tradition, the Bible portrays Satan – formerly Lucifer – as God’s anointed guardian, preceding all others of the

¹⁰⁵ Ebata, 19

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Mary and Appleby, 820.

heavenly host in power and beauty, before his rebellion.¹⁰⁸ As the enemy of God, he is depicted as a beguiling serpent,¹⁰⁹ a bringer of death,¹¹⁰ a slanderer,¹¹¹ a great seven-headed red dragon, a deceiver of the whole world,¹¹² and is responsible for the past and present evils found in the world.¹¹³ Satan's human allies are also attributed with stylised characteristics: they are worthless; their throats are open graves; they have deceitful tongues and poisonous lips; "their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the ways of peace have they not known."¹¹⁴

The depiction of the enemy in religious tradition and sacred texts allows for the religious extremist to "name, dramatize and even mythologize" their temporal enemies in a manner that is consistent with the script of cosmic war.¹¹⁵ Consequentially, it also allows for the religious extremist to delegitimise, dehumanise and demonise their enemies. This requires blanket characterisations of large groups of people or institutions, since "it is much easier to stereotype and categorize a whole people as collective enemies" than it is to hate and single out particular individuals.¹¹⁶ The 'socially assembled' enemy provides the religious extremist with a constructed and stylised negative point of reference, and a tangible manifestation of the evil the faithful hopes to overcome.¹¹⁷ When Reverend Ian Paisley, an Irish Protestant leader in Ulster, labels supporters of the ecumenical position within Christianity "emissaries from hell... sent by Beelzebub, commissioned by Satan to tell the man of God to compromise"¹¹⁸, he names,

¹⁰⁸ Ezekiel 28:12-15, Isaiah 14:12-14, Jude 1:9

¹⁰⁹ Genesis 3:1

¹¹⁰ Hebrews 2:14

¹¹¹ Matthew 4:1

¹¹² Revelation 12:1, 12:9

¹¹³ 2Corinthians 4:4

¹¹⁴ Romans 3:12-17

¹¹⁵ Mary and Appleby, 820.

¹¹⁶ Juergensmeyer, *Terror and the Mind of God*, 177

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 174

¹¹⁸ See note 35.

dramatises and mythologizes the enemy. By insinuating that those who work towards the ecumenical position are in league with the Devil, he demonises and delegitimises the ecumenical position and dehumanises its supporters. For Revered Paisley, interfaith collaboration, compromise and understanding are evils that are not possible for any “man of God”.

Juergensmeyer notes that the concept of ‘enemy’ is diffused and flexible enough to encompass more than one group, but can be separated into two categories. The primary enemy is the religious rival or political authority that actively opposes the religious extremist groups, “against which there is usually a commonsense basis for conflict and animosity”; the secondary enemy is anyone that, from the extremist’s perspective, is unable “to take seriously the notion of an absolute, sacred struggle”, who protects or colludes with the primary enemy, and who insists on treating the fundamentalist struggle against evil as something that can be settled with agreement or accommodation.¹¹⁹ The ‘socially assembled’ enemy - be it the inchoate minions of Evil controlling political institutions, moderate co-religionists, political or religious rivals - provides the fundamentalist with a constructed and stylised negative point of reference, and a tangible manifestation of the evil the faithful hopes to overcome.¹²⁰

Right-wing extremists also name, dramatise and mythologize their enemies in a manner that is delegitimising, dehumanising and demonising. The Vanguard News Network, extreme right website, whose motto is “No Jews. Just Right”,¹²¹ provides graphic examples of how the enemy is created within right-wing extremism and how this process mirrors the same traits as the conception of the enemy within the religious fundamentalist tradition. The antagonistic relationship extremists have with the constructed enemy is not bound within the confines of time and space. The enemy, be it someone who cannot belong to the sacralised collectivity or who

¹¹⁹ Juergensmeyer, *Terror and the Mind of God*, 178

¹²⁰ Terror 174

¹²¹ The Vanguard News Network, <http://www.vanguardnewsnetwork.com> accessed February 16th 2009

rejects the extremist's monistic viewpoint, is portrayed as threatening to the sacralised collectivity. The enemy, who cannot belong to the sacralised community, is often constructed with immutable traits that make it nearly impossible for coexistence or compromise to end the perceived antagonistic relationship:

Negroes, Blacks, Africans, African-Americans. 'Groids, Nigs, Nogs. Baboons, Bootlips, Jungle Bunnies, Bluegums. Whatever they want to be called, whatever you want to call them, whatever in the final analysis it turns out they genetically "are" -- they have no shame... They cannot survive on their own anywhere food isn't openly dangling on trees and the climate isn't mild enough for them to sleep where they drop after humping something -- plant, ape, infant, fellow she-groid, or battered and unconscious white woman. As it stands now, shameless 'groid animals that they are, they insist on being financially "owned" and supported and cared for by whites... most are nothing more than aggressive, abrasive, Jew-fueled temper tantrums waiting to happen... It's the same everywhere, all the time, even when the cameras are rolling. But only so long as Jews remain in control of central casting [*sic*].¹²²

In the first sentence, the author depicts the enemy as one monolithic group, a collective enemy with 'black skin'. No attention is paid or distinctions made to the historical, political and geographic differences that exist between people who could be labelled as Black, African or of African descent. In the second sentence, after having catalogued the various ways the enemy might self-identify or be identified, the author decisively names the enemy using a litany of racial slurs that are, by definition, degrading and dehumanising. The author also provides a dramatized picture of the enemy, which clearly demarks the sacralised community from its foe: biologically, the enemy is clearly 'other', not human but sub human, degenerate and animal. In terms of behaviour, the enemy is indolent, lecherous, bestial, aggressive, useless, shameless and opportunistic in ways the author has framed as morally questionable, if not illegal or criminal.

Within right-wing extremism, mythologizing the enemy involves firmly embedding the dramatised characteristics of the collective enemy in such a manner that is consistent with the

¹²² Victor Wolzek, "'Groid-Destroyed Paradise: CBS *Survivor* Mirrors Reality", Vanguard News Network, March 25, 2002, <http://www.vanguardnewsnetwork.com/v1/index276.htm>, (last accessed, April 1, 2010)

particular historical or mythological context of the conspiracy theory narrative. The characteristics of the collective enemy are often presented in a manner that makes them seem consistent over time and circumstances. The reworking of outdated stereotypes or myths can be seen in many of the current characterisations of the collective enemy. Any dissonance between the ‘historic’ image of the enemy and current manifestations of the collective enemy can be reconciled through conspiratorial thinking:

But of course, Uniformed Black Hero exists only in the media... To repeat the obvious: blacks *are* lazy, stupid, cowardly and criminally inclined. Even when they're wrapped in cloaks of officialdom and draped with badges, medals and guns. Under the uniforms, blacks are just what they've always been -- small-brained, wooly-haired, jut-lipped subhumans, some 50,000 years behind Whites in terms of human evolution but dressed up to look like us in a valiant attempt to Make It Work [*sic*].¹²³

In both excerpts, the ‘historical’ image of the enemy, devoid of agency, is replaced by more contemporary image that makes use of conspiratorial thinking to keep the ‘historical’ image relevant: The enemy has always been unable to “survive on their own anywhere food isn’t openly dangling on trees and the climate isn’t mild” but now, as “Jew-fueled temper tantrums waiting to happen”, they “insist on being cared for” at the expense of the sacralised collectivity; Even when draped in the symbols of officialdom, thanks to a “valiant attempt to make it work”, the enemy continues to be “subhuman” and “50 000 years behind Whites in terms of human evolution” The reference to a particular media source as the “Jew York Times”,¹²⁴ and implying that ‘Jews’ are in charge of ‘central casting’, demonstrates how both authors use collusion to explain how the collective enemy, who ‘historically’ has always been ‘less’ than the sacralised community, has managed to compete against the sacralised collectivity within the social and political sphere and poses a continuous threat or danger to the sacralised collectivity. Within the

¹²³ Douglas Wright, “Niggers in Uniform: They’re Uniformly Niggers”, Vanguard News Network, <http://www.vanguardnewsnetwork.com/v1/index282.htm> (last accessed, February 16th 2010)

¹²⁴ Ibid.

framework of the conspiracy theory, both authors can continue the myth of the degenerate, sub-human enemy and account of any dissonance between the 'historic' enemy and its current manifestation.

Both authors also provide examples of how the concept of enemy is porous enough to encompass more than one group. As in religious extremism, it is also possible to separate the enemies of right-wing extremists into primary and secondary groupings. 'Blacks' and 'Jews' are clearly primary enemies within the preceding excerpts. Other groups who do not *prima facie* belong to the sacralised collectivity, could be considered primary enemies, especially if they were seen as vying for power and resources that extremists consider should belong exclusively to the sacralised collectivity. Secondary enemies, similarly within the religious fundamentalist tradition, are people and institutions who are seen to have chosen to collude with the primary enemy, to treat the extremist's struggle as trivial and/or who believe that the struggle can be settled with reason and accommodation. The following excerpt does not specifically name groups of people or occupations as the enemy, but instead identifies movements and ideologies used by the primary enemy – the 'Marxian Jew' – to destroy the collectivity. It follows logically that anyone ascribing to or working towards the goals listed below, would be seen as actively colluding with the primary enemy:

[A]ll of Marxian Jews' sacred cows in the twentieth century – radical feminism (for "liberating" women from familial responsibilities [*sic*]), forced integration (for mongrelizing [*sic*] the White race and building a one-world, multiracial america [*sic*]), welfare transfer payments (to enslave the productive to the needs of the unproductive and strap the poor to dependency and the state), women's sexual "liberation" (for destroying the nuclear family), free-speech "expressions" [*sic*](for making private sexuality and pornography public fare), right to slaughter wombed babies (for killing "accidents" from one-night stands), special "civil" rights (for advancing minorities and women at the expense of White males and their constitutional rights), children's right to deny parental authority (for giving minor daughters easy access to contraceptives and abortions), politically correct HIV (for protecting homosexuals' deadly sexual craft), racial quotas

(for making the inherently unequal appear more equal) ... – [have] had but one evil end: Marxian universalism.¹²⁵

Here, feminists, reproductive rights advocates, integrationists, pornographers, homosexuals, abortionists, and civil rights advocates are easily identifiable as secondary enemies. However, if one were to take into account groups or institutions that are tacitly involved in the means mentioned of ‘destroying’ the collectivity, the list of secondary enemies becomes extensive. The government and its organs, the public service, educational institutions, physicians, philanthropists, lawyers, judges, authors, academics, sexually active women, homosexuals, artists, private enterprise, anyone with ‘undesirable’ or ‘unequal’ immutable traits, along with people living with HIV and AIDS, are all depicted as engaging in activities that destroy the sacralised collectivity. Any person, institution or movement that does not ascribe, conform or works against the extremists monistic and moralistic vision of society, becomes a secondary enemy.

Both religious and right-wing extremists go to great lengths to create vivid, dramatic and highly stylised images of their enemies within equally impressive mythologies. The cosmic war enemy is scripted by religious and right-wing extremists as agents of evil, if not the embodiment of Evil itself, whose sole purpose is the destruction of the sacralised collectivity. The cosmic war and the conspiracy theory are at the ideological core of violent religious fundamentalism and right-wing extremism. Both provide adherents with the necessary interrelated convictions and assumptions that allow for a particular understanding of reality, while indicating the appropriate ways of dealing with that reality.

¹²⁵ Founder’s America, “Marxian Jews and What They Mean to You” Vanguard News Network, <http://www.vanguardnewsnetwork.com/v1/index194.htm> (last February 16, 2010)

Chapter three: Violence as Civic Activism

By examining the materials produced by right-wing extremist organisations and individuals, right-wing extremist violence can be seen to exist at once as a form of civic activism and as a form of worship to a secular entity. There is a prodigious amount of material to be found on extremist forums, websites, speeches and publications that explain and justify the use of violence. The conspiracy theory and the socially assembled enemy provide the ideological backdrop for understanding how what many dismiss as mindless bigotry, is taken by others as an honest description of the current state of affairs and where prescriptions to secure the safety, well-being and future of the sacralised collectivity are aggressive and heavy-handed. Although there is no causal relationship between word and deed, rhetorical violence plays an important role in rationalising, legitimising and encouraging manifestations of actual violence. Violence is legitimised through overt calls by “those who clothe racial or religious justification in more general political terms”, or by “those who decry violence while expressing ‘understanding’ for why others chose such alternatives.”¹²⁶ Ted Gurr notes that rhetoric may be explicit enough in its prescription for violence that its dissemination “provides sufficient clues for violence”, though it is unlikely that rhetoric alone could produce “a wholly new, unfamiliar type of collective action.”¹²⁷ However, when rhetorical violence is used in the presence of actual violence or in conjunction with news of actual violence occurring, the rhetorical violence becomes a much more effective call to arms than rhetoric alone.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Fred R. Von Der Mehden, *Comparative Political Violence* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall , 1973), 20.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 34.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*.

Clues for Violence

The ideology of the extreme right is highly conducive to violence and provides ample clues for violence given the battle narrative within the conspiracy theory and the socially assembled enemy. Since the conspiracy theory allows right-wing extremists to frame their struggle for survival in a larger historical or mythological context, violence is hardly a “new and unfamiliar type of collective action”, but one that has served to protect the sacralised collectivity in the past. Within the neo-traditionalism of the extremist paradigm, the means of resistance used to protect the sacralised collectivity in bygone years are just as legitimate within the current context:

Today we are told that pacifism, not the warrior virtues of our sires, will bring universal peace. The reality, however, is that by accepting sweet-sounding fantasies we have become weak-willed, indecisive, and in many cases, cowardly. Our ancestors didn't preach the gospel of strength as a means to oppress others, but because they recognized a valid law of nature: power abhors a vacuum. When good men refuse to fight for what's right, then evil men will rule.¹²⁹

The clues for violence also extend to the improbability of instituting the ‘will of the people’ within a pluralist, liberal democratic setting. In this context, the rights of the sacralised collectivity are not held above the rights of any other social group, and state organs and power are not exclusively controlled by extremists. It follows that extremists must rely on non-violent civic activism to provide specific cues for violence, and provide preparation for its impending use:

Although it is not yet possible or realistic for us to expect to be able to openly oppose our enemies in open combat, or to gain power immediately through violence, we must begin now to educate and organize ourselves and the rest of our people who will be willing to join us in changing the unfortunate and intolerable state of affairs under which we now languish.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Steve Stein, “A Political Discussion: Aryan Folkways”, *America's National Socialist Party*, <http://nsm88.org/articles/sstein14.html> (last accessed May 27, 2010)

¹³⁰ White Revolution, “Mission Statement”, *WhiteRevolution.com*, <http://www.whiterevolution.com/mission2.html> (last accessed May 13, 2010)

In the event that right-wing extremists do manage to gain the required social and political capital to legitimately retain exclusive control of the state and its organs, cues for violence and the use of violence would continue. Because instituting the platforms and policies of the extreme right rests on the use of extraordinary state powers, state violence would replace collective and individual violence as a means to bring about the desired social changes.¹³¹

While not all right-wing extremist groups are violent, a commitment to violence is not predicated on the execution of violent acts. The National Socialist Party of Canada (NSPC) declares itself an organisation “dedicated to peaceful revolutionary struggle for National Socialism and White sovereignty within Canada” and “does not endorse illegal acts including vandalism”,¹³² but claims to “understand the frustration of young White people who have been betrayed by their governments at both the federal and provincial levels” who engage in illegal activities.¹³³ The NSPC’s commitment to violence is rooted in the belief that Canada is not a free, liberal democratic country, but one that suffers under the “Jewish/Zionist control... drifting toward Judeo-Fascist tyranny”.¹³⁴ In order to liberate Canada, the organisation believes that a small group of independent, dedicated members, acting as vehicles of the “common spirit of the whole people” must work to “prepare the way for the military fight to re-conquer the nation's liberty”. The NSPC clearly demonstrates that their “peaceful revolutionary struggle” must give way to violent action, when they deems it timely, for example, with the emergence of a full-blown ‘Judeo-Fascist’ tyranny in Canada or when the preparations for the impending military fight have been completed. The non-violent nature of this organisation is hardly due to a

¹³¹ Ebata, 17.

¹³² National Socialist Party of Canada, “Resistance”, http://nspcanada.nfshost.com/index.php?page_id=20 (last accessed November 7, 2009)

¹³³ National Socialist Party of Canada, “Hate Vandalism Stuns Reserve” http://nspcanada.nfshost.com/story.php?archive_id=306 (last accessed November 7, 2009)

¹³⁴ National Socialist Party of Canada, “Resistance”.

commitment to non-violent action and is clearly motivated by strategic considerations. Strategic considerations also seem to distinguish organisations and individuals who currently engage and advocate for immediate violent action and those who do not:

At this time the budding movement necessarily divides into two major segments... The major segments are the overt or open cadre, who are the propaganda arm, and the military arm. It is the job of the open cadre to counter system sponsored propaganda, to educate the Folk, to provide a pool of manpower from which the covert or military arm can be built. Above all, they must build a revolutionary mentality. Real and major changes in religious or political power systems do not occur until substantial numbers of people realize the old systems are destructive, genocidal and beyond repair. For these reasons the job of the overt revolutionary is absolutely vital. Additionally, the overt cadre is often known to the spies of the system for there must be spokesmen and publications. So the overt cadre receive the slander of the system media. Since they are under scrutiny, the overt cadre must be rigidly separated from the armed party or the military arm, and must operate within the parameters allowed. The armed party draws recruits from the overt or political arm [*sic*].¹³⁵

By creating a pool from which violent movements and individuals may draw more recruits, highly institutionalised organisations of the extreme right are complicit in the promotion of violence.

This strategic distinction also applies to extreme right organisations and movements. Highly institutionalised organisations spread and promote their ideology through persuasion, lobbying and contact with the public.¹³⁶ While parties aim on governing and mobilising electoral support, other highly institutionalised organisations work behind the scenes trying to influence public debates, and orient their target audience closer to their goals.¹³⁷ Violent movements and individuals “recognise that constituencies with high levels of extremist attitudes support the rooting of their attitudes and mobilise such constituencies by symbolic and violent means.”¹³⁸ The separation between the legal and institutional machinations of extreme right versus a more

¹³⁵ David Lane, “Revolution By Number 14”, *White Aryan Resistance*, 9 <http://www.resist.com/> last accessed February 18th, 2009

¹³⁶ Pedahzur and Weinberg, 69.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 62, 69

¹³⁸ Ibid, 69.

direct, social and diffused kind is nothing more than diversification of tactics to achieve the same goal – the protection and restoration of the purity of the sacralised collectivity at all costs. The use of unrestricted means to achieve a goal is a commitment to violence as it invariably leads to the use of violence.

Violence as civic activism:

As a political phenomenon, right-wing extremism seeks to transform the social and political status quo in accordance to a ‘collective will’ it sees as legitimate and supreme. Since restoring and protecting the purity of the community is a defining feature of all manifestations of right-wing extremism, the transformation of the social and political status quo also has a defensive quality. The most obvious purpose of right-wing extremist rhetoric is to educate potential members of the sacralised collectivity, create a ‘revolutionary’ mentality among adherents and spur them on to action. One can also expect that the actions encouraged by the violent and non-violent rhetoric of the extreme right are also defensive and/or transformative in purpose. The rhetoric and actions of the extreme right is not solely geared towards adherents but also carry a message for the broader society. The rallies, protests, demonstrations and other civic actions organised by the extreme right at a grassroots level serve to show both society and government their strength and the support they enjoy, while the violence they employ is “a brutal attempt to destabilise the regime by using means of terror.”¹³⁹ Hate crimes committed against people and property, along with popular mobilisation based on prejudicial and derogatory ideas, represent quintessential grassroots activity; they are a ‘citizen’s response’ both violent and non-violent, aimed at sending a ‘message’ to the targeted people as well as to the government.¹⁴⁰ Right-wing extremist violence, rhetorical and actual, seeks not only to reproduce itself by

¹³⁹ Ibid, 69.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 64.

encouraging others to engage in violence, but also seeks to communicate distinct messages to potential members of the sacralised collectivity, to adherents with a ‘revolutionary’ mentality, and to perceived enemies:

The best propaganda is simple: kill the jews, kill the niggers, kill the beaners, kill the regime criminals, kill the whiggers [*sic*], kill, kill, kill, kill, kill. ... The purpose of propaganda today is to plant seeds in the minds of the natural White leadership which shall become warlords and confusion, hatred and chaos in the minds of the whigger [*sic*] herd animals that it is jews and whigger [*sic*] regime criminals responsible for their ALL their [*sic*] ills and not the fact that they are stupid worthless whiggers who allowed all this shizz [*sic*] to happen and now the chickens are coming home to roost, and fear and depressive apathy that there is nothing that they can do to keep justice from destroying them as all the blame is laid at their door amongst the House of Ahab, like Elijah did upon the jewdickal [*sic*] murder of Naboth. Thus the same simple message has three different receptions amongst three different audiences of Resistance warlords, ZOGling [*sic*] whigger [*sic*] herd animals, and ZOG/Babylon regime criminals. Same simple message to three audiences which includes everyone [*sic*].¹⁴¹

The quotation above clearly depicts violence as a propagandistic tool to inspire further acts of violence and fear among the socially constructed enemies, which include specific groups of people, but also the current form of government and/or the actual current government. It also reveals how multifaceted rhetorical and actual violence can be, serving a plethora of purposes. The Biblical references to 1 Kings 21 and 2 Kings 9 point to violence as Divine Retribution or vengeance, while the reference to Babylon and “chickens coming home to roost” connotes violence as a means of administering justice. Within the story of the destruction of the house of Ahab and its connection to the murder of Naboth, rhetorical and actual violence also emerge as defensive tools, as transformative means of destroying the current socio-political system, as a means of reclaiming the communal standing of the collectivity along with the resources associated with the position, as a means of social control, as a means to cleanse the society of

¹⁴¹ Martin Lindstedt, comment on “The Wannabe Lead Microphone of Whiggerland”, Covenant People’s Ministries, comment posted March 30th, 2009, <http://cpm.noonhost.com/viewtopic.php?f=4&t=1080&p=4699> (last accessed May 30, 2010)

unwanted elements, and as the only means for dealing with an intransigent enemy. Worth noting is that while the destruction of the house of Ahab was prophesied, the actual destruction of the house was not a direct order given by God to any persons. The author's specific use of this Biblical story over any other, may point to a cognisance that the even within a religious paradigm, the violence referred to directly served a socio-political purpose rather than, and only indirectly a religious one. Violence in the quote and in the story is portrayed as a means of directly engaging with the polity to bring about the desired or necessary social change. While it would be impossible to compile an exhaustive description to the purpose of actual manifestations of right-wing extremist violence, the threads mentioned above represent justifications of violence that are linked to the primary preoccupations of right-wing extremism: Socio-political transformation based on the institution of the collective will, and defence of the sacralised collectivity.

Violence as defensive

The most obvious and observable justification of right-wing extremist violence is defence. However, what this violence is used to defend against is not immediately clear outside of the extremist paradigm. The monism, moralism and the comprehensive design of the conspiracy theory found within the ideology of the extreme right allows extremists to reduce all human action and actors in terms of how they aid or harm the maintenance and restoration of the sacralised collectivity. Anything that does not aid in achieving this goal is interpreted as harmful, threatening and wrong. In the absence of institutional means for dealing with perceived threats, violence becomes a defensive tool to deal with the gravest and most pressing dangers

that extremists believe are threatening the sacralised collectivity. Of course, different manifestations of right-wing extremism will interpret different threats as more important than others. Thus, the justification of violence as defensive can be observed in connection to many issues and against many enemies.

Like religious extremist violence explained by Appleby and Garvey, right-wing extremist violence is often justified as a reaction to the perceived loss of social standing or resources for the sacralised collectivity. In the absence of institutional means to secure the resources and social standing of the sacralised collectivity, violence becomes a means to regain what has been lost and to prevent further loss:

Russians do not want to live like slaves in their own land, which is what's happening now. Since the government can't deal with the problem of the immigration process, the people begin showing initiative, which can result in various forms of violence.... This violence is justified because the government is not taking action.... If the government is not going to deal systematically with what's happening in Russia, then our society will be on the edge of a civil war.¹⁴²

The sacralised collectivity's loss of social standing or lack of resources is attributed to the presence of unwanted social elements or out-groups. Non-members of the sacralised collectivity are not only responsible for the 'slavish' economic and social position of the sacralised collectivity but are also a personification of the sacralised collectivity's perceived debasement. Within this quote, issue is not taken with too much immigration or some aspect or certain types of immigration but with immigration as a whole and consequentially, all immigrants. What is more, an unresponsive government has precluded non-violent means being used to settle the immigration 'problem'. Violence against immigrants or other out-groups reflects the right-wing extremist's attempt to recapture the former social position of the sacralised community by destroying the cause and personification of its debasement.

¹⁴² Christof Putzel, *From Russia with Hate*, (Current.com, November 12, 2007) http://current.com/items/84906361_from_russia_with_hate (last accessed June 7, 2010)

Holding non-members of the sacralised collectivity responsible for social and economics ills does not only occur with power or social contenders. The presence of non-members among the sacralised collectivity is also used to explain social ills that were hitherto ‘unknown’ to the sacralised collectivity its ‘traditional’ form. Similarly to religious extremists, violence is used by extremists as a means of ridding the body politic of unwanted social elements who are held responsible for various social pathologies and restoring it to its ‘intended’, ‘healthy’ constitution. By restoring the purity of the sacralised collectivity forcefully, by extricating the unwanted social elements violently, the sacralised collectivity can also remove the social ills plaguing them:

Last summer, nothing less than a White insurrection broke out all across northern Russian.... The attacks on anyone and anything connected with Africa, Asia or the Middle East were launched by literally tens of thousands of Russian men, women and children from the Baltic Sea to Moscow from mid-August through early September.... Russian people finally erupted against “the rising tide of color”. Too many years of rape, murder, theft, drug peddling, miscegenation, infectious diseases and urban blight provoked the Aryan spirit of self-defense. (...) [T]he Eastern European will to clean house has risen with a vengeance.¹⁴³

As the socially constructed enemy, non-members are dangerous, harmful social elements which will destroy the sacralised collectivity if they are not expunged. Again, out-groups are not only to blame for the social ills plaguing the collectivity, but are a physical manifestation of the social ills themselves. The social ills that the extremist associates with a particular out-group are seen as a constituent characteristic of the out-group; Members of the out-group do not choose to rape, murder, steal, they are by nature, thieves, murderers and rapists. For the extremist, curing the social ills associated with non-members of the sacralised collectivity is not contingent on a change in behaviour; the only way to remedy these problems is to get rid of the non-members entirely.

¹⁴³ A.V. Schaerffenberg, “Nazi Questions and Answers”, *Nazi Lauck NSDAP/AO*, <http://www.nazi-lauck-nsdapao.com/nazi.htm> (last accessed on Oct, 24th 2009)

The way in which the enemy is socially constructed – as inherently evil, dangerous and destructive – precludes coexistence, discussion and compromise because, just as in the ‘Uniformed Black Hero’ quote, the enemy can only be dangerous and destructive to the sacralised collectivity. The evil cabal to destroy the sacralised collectivity also precludes coexistence, discussion and compromise, since the enemy is perceived as stopping at nothing until the sacralised collectivity is no more. Without the possibility of compromise and discussion, extremists are left with no ‘choice’ but to respond to the threat posed by out-groups in a hawkish and aggressive manner:

It also has to be accepted that our enemies cannot in reality be bargained with nor reasoned with. It has to be accepted that they feel no pity nor do they feel any remorse. They have an agenda which involves nothing less than the wholesale destruction and transformation of our racial and cultural life. There is no middle ground for our enemies. There can therefore in reality be no middle ground for us!¹⁴⁴

Although there is no specific reference to violence in the quote above, the insinuation of violence is not subtle. The enemy will stop at nothing to destroy the sacralised collectivity and its defenders must stop at nothing to protect it.

Violence as transformative

While the presence of enemies or non-members may be considered by some as the gravest threat to the sacralised collectivity, other extremist thought see the current social and political systems as the real enemy. Like religious fundamentalist violence, the violence of the extreme right also has a transformative element, as they both seek to destroy the current socio-political order and create a new one based on their respective tenets, mores and codes of conduct. Within this extremist paradigm, the social pathologies experienced by the sacralised community

¹⁴⁴ Steve Smith, “Know Thy Enemy”, British People’s Party, <http://www.bpp.org.uk/knowenemy.html> (last accessed June 8, 2010).

will persist as long as the system that created them or failed to adequately address them is operational:

There is only one enemy: the System; everything else is peripheral. Non-white violence; high taxes; pollution; illegal immigration, and a thousand other things are very real concerns – but they're all symptoms. The System caused every one of these problems, and none of them can be solved until the monster is dead.¹⁴⁵

The RNE member quoted in the introduction decrying the absence of laws that would allow him “to take up weapons to fight scum”, the ‘betrayal’ by both levels of government referred to by the NSPC, the reference to the system being ‘genocidal’ and destructive, all provide clues as to how the extreme right would see the pluralist liberal democratic systems of North America and Europe as inimical to its goals. Accordingly, the pluralist liberal democratic system is to blame for the social ills, threats and destruction facing the sacralised collectivity, because it protects and supports non-members, and provides institutional means for the authors and supporters of the evil cabal to continuously undermine the purity and well-being of the sacralised community. Government inaction on issues concerning the sacralised collectivity, the refusal to impose the neo-traditionalism called for by extremists and the implementation of the ‘will of the people’ also allow the extremist to question the legitimacy of current modes of governance. With the destruction of the current system of governance, right-wing extremists would be in a position to halt the decline and restore the sacralised collectivity:

The clock can be turned back, if we have the political will to do so... History is replete with examples of much bolder changes. ... We are not the party of government and politics; it is our task to resist, to turn back what liberalism has gained since 1913. Our goal is not to "go along to get along," for we are counterrevolutionary insurgents using

¹⁴⁵ Steve Stein, “A political discussion: Death to the system, “*America’s National Socialist Party*” <http://nsm88.org/articles/ssstein16.html> (last accessed on October 24, 2009)

political means, for now. Our mission is to overturn the current Establishment, a regime revealed to be illegitimate. There is no room for compromise or coexistence.¹⁴⁶

The transformative violence of the extreme right also mimics religious fundamentalist violence that emanates from the belief that the sacralised collectivity is ‘divinely’ chosen. The problems experienced by the sacralised collectivity are interpreted by extremists as a consequence of departing from a predetermined destiny of greatness. Since inferior and alien groups, people and ideologies have usurped those of the traditional sacralised community, violence is a tool used by extremists to destroy the system under which they currently flounder and (re)claim the rightful place – and resources – that they see as belonging exclusively to the sacralised collectivity:

There is plenty of land, property, money and pussy for the White man if only he will rise up, destroy and exterminate his jew, mud, and whigger regime criminal oppressors and parasites – all it takes is the determination and desire to take back that which only belongs to the White Man by birthright, and which these misbegotten [w]hordes can only steal by deceit by lying and edjewmacation in whigger factories – which need to be destroyed [*sic*].¹⁴⁷

Right-wing extremists also see history normatively, where good intentions or bad intentions shape all human events. Violence against the system can also be seen as a means of shifting the history of the sacralised collectivity back in the ‘right’ direction. If the current socio-political system is seen by extremists as a historical aberration or the product of bad intentions, its destruction not only allows the extremist to achieve its underlying goal, but also brings the extremist closer to fulfilling the predetermined destiny of the sacralised collectivity:

TIME IS WAAAAAY PAST DUE FOR THE OUTRIGHT KILLING OF POLITICIANS ON THE RIGHT AND LEFT. THATS THE ONLY WAY TO FREEDOM GENTLEMAN, YOU CAN DENY, YOU CAN DEBATE, YOU CAN WISH, YOU CAN VOTE, BUT NOTHING

¹⁴⁶ Paul Fallavollita, “A Reply to Jonah Goldberg”, comment on Church of True Israel forum February 26, 2002, <http://www.churchoftrueisrael.com/nsforum/ns2-26.html> (Last accessed March 23, 2010)

¹⁴⁷ Martin Lindstedt comment on “I’ve Been ‘Free’ for a Year Now”, Church of Jesus Christ Christian/Aryan Nation blog, comment posted on <http://cjcc-an.blogspot.com/> (lasted accessed April 1, 2010)

EVER CHANGES THRU THOSE CONCEPTS, ONLY BLOODSHED AND VIOLENCE IS WHAT MOVES HISTORY IN THE CORRECT PATH [*sic*].¹⁴⁸

The transformative violence of the extreme right is not solely used to destroy systems of government. Right-wing extremist violence and the promise of further manifestations of right-wing extremist violence, can change the very nature of targeted and affected societies and communities. People considered by extremists to be non-members of the sacralised community often opt to reduce their social presence or avoid an area entirely to protect life and limb in response to targeted right-wing extremist violence. During the 2006 FIFA World Cup championship in Germany, non-white fans, particularly of African and Asian descent, were advised by some local non-governmental organisations to avoid certain areas as “they may not leave there with their lives.”¹⁴⁹ Some of the areas designated as ‘no go zones’ were not just so during the World Cup, but were also areas where “school classes with many immigrant children question whether it is safe to go to...for camping trips.”¹⁵⁰ Residents and the local government of Belfast, Northern Ireland have experienced first-hand how acts of violence and the threat of violence affects certain members of perceived out-groups. In 2004, after a six-foot wooden plank was thrown through a widow belonging to a Pakistani family, the former Lord Mayor declared that this and other similar incidents were “part of a campaign of violence and intimidation aimed at driving ethnic minority communities out of these areas.”¹⁵¹ In June 2009, 20 Romanian families fled their homes and sought the safety of a church after a wave of attacks by extremists armed with bottles and bricks. The church that offered them sanctuary also had

¹⁴⁸ Golden *nugget, comment on October 23, 2009 “Stormfront’s Whites Forwards”, North West Nationalists blogspot, comment posted April 7, 2009 <http://northwestnationalists.blogspot.com/2009/04/stormfronts-whites-forward.html> (last accessed April 1, 2010)

¹⁴⁹ Laura Smith-Spark, “Racism Fears Dog World Cup”, BBC News, May 26, 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/5012182.stm> (last accessed April 3, 2010)

¹⁵⁰ “Is East Germany Safe for Foreigners?”, Spiegle Online International, May 18, 2006 <http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,416904,00.html> (last accessed April 3, 2010)

¹⁵¹ “Racist Attack was Hate Crime”, BBC News UK January 8, 2004 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/3378927.stm (last accessed April 3, 2010)

their windows broken. The Romanian Foreign Ministry confirmed that 115 victims of the recent attacks left the area and some of these were requesting repatriation.¹⁵²

The use of violence and the promise of violence to achieve social transformation sometimes occur with the tacit support of the larger society, particularly if it is issue oriented. The violence that ended Belgrade's first attempt at a Gay Pride parade in 2001 has been used as a threat by groups, including right-wing extremists, for eight years to prevent the organisation of another parade.¹⁵³ Because "Serbia is still a homophobic society", organisers received very little political support for the 2009 parade and worked under the real possibility of civic violence since "everybody knows what will happen if the Belgrade pride goes ahead."¹⁵⁴

The aversion of out-groups to certain areas for fear of being attacked, for expressing contrarian views, or to holding certain events, affords right-wing extremists a small but significant measure of social control. They can effectively create pockets of 'rule' in both geographical and situational enclaves, where right-wing extremist 'collective will' can be enforced or instituted with little or no resistance: "with [these] zones we will create a counter-balance. We have to create the kind of free spaces in which we can de facto assume power and we will be able to penalise – that is punish – weaklings and enemies, support co-fighters, and help oppressed, excluded and persecuted fellow citizens."¹⁵⁵ These enclaves represent a direct challenge to the established political and social order in which they are found. Since the extremist world-view dominates within the enclaves, the liberal democratic socio-political order

¹⁵² "Roma Seek Shelter after Racist Attack in Northern Ireland", CBC News, June 17, 2009 <http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2009/06/17/romania-belfast-attacks017.html> (last accessed April 3, 2010)

¹⁵³ Mark Lowen, "Gay March Plans Tests Serb Fellings", *BBC News*, September 9, 2009 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8263116.stm> (last accessed April 3, 2010).

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Lukáš Novotný, "Right-wing extremism and No-go-areas in Germany", *Czech Sociological Review*, 45 no. 3 (2009), 601 accessed from http://sreview.soc.cas.cz/uploads/a074c87baf072f4e34d3217664090b168c8ac022_NOVOTNYsoccas2009-3.pd (last accessed on April 3, 2010)

is relegated to a secondary position, allowing the extremists to “take control of people’s fates and establish a separate legal order and system of values.”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 602.

Chapter four: Violence as part of a religious liturgy

Transformative and defensive violence of the extreme right is in essence a means to an end. However, like its religious fundamentalist counterpart, right-wing extremist violence is more than just a means to an end, but also has profound meaning for extremists themselves. The highly personal nature of both religious extremism and right-wing extremism make it possible to compare and contrast religious with right-wing extremist violence as a personal ritual and as a ritual of the utmost importance to the preservation of the sacred and sacralised community.

Generally, religion satisfies the adherents' need "for a conception of reality and life, and for direction in relation to them. Without religion and without this direction, you cannot live or you live unhappily with a divided and confused spirit."¹⁵⁷ In any religious system, the individual's relationship to the Divine remains the lowest common denominator. Within the religious system, the Divine does not require human or individual acknowledgement to move within the realm of mortals, whereas the individual must subsume the act of being completely to the Divine in order to effectively understand the world, the nature of being and thus, live a complete life. Being religious is not solely defined by the act of worship focused on the Divine, but when the believer "puts all the resources of his mind, the complete submission of his will, and the whole-souled ardour of fanaticism at the service of a cause or an individual who becomes the goal and guide of his thoughts and actions."¹⁵⁸ The relationship between the devotee and the Divine, as instituted by religion through ritual, divinely guided action or sacrifice, is not only votive but highly redemptive.

Juergensmeyer does not see an intrinsic difference between mainstream religions and extremist manifestations. The exceptionalness of religious extremism is found in how adherents

¹⁵⁷ Gentile, 11.

¹⁵⁸ Gentile 6.

express deeply held convictions and the manner in which they formulate a religious response to social situations;¹⁵⁹ or, as Marty and Appleby contend, their use of religious doctrine “as ideological weapons against a hostile world”.¹⁶⁰ In his discussion with supporters and perpetrators of fundamentalist religious violence, Juergensmeyer was struck by the “intensity of their quest for a deeper level of spirituality than that offered by the superficial values of the modern world.”¹⁶¹ Religion offered them safe harbour in a world filled with danger, violence and chaos; the intransigent form of religious belief they chose was a response to the ‘soft treachery’ of modern secular values, and provided order to the disarray in their lives that they were both victims of and responsible for.¹⁶² He notes that in their versions of ‘traditional religion’, they revealed that their concern was not solely for “their religious, ethnic, or national communities”, but also for “their own personal and imperilled selves.”¹⁶³ This is not to say that religious extremists are more concerned with the self than with the religious community. It simply highlights that the cosmic war, the eternal struggle between Good and Evil, manifests itself within, as well as around religious extremists. “Jihad of the heart”, “circumcision of the heart” and other personal images of struggle that abound in both Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic faiths, place the religious extremist at the heart of the cosmic war: “On a personal level it is a conflict between faith and the lack of faith; on the social level it is a battle between truth and evil.”¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹ Juergensmeyer, *Terror and the Mind of God*, 225-226.

¹⁶⁰ Marty and Appleby, 826

¹⁶¹ Juergensmyer, *Terror and the mind of God*, 226

¹⁶² Ibid, 227.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 151.

The religious idealism – the promise that the application of religious norms will effect radical change and vanquish human problems¹⁶⁵ – associated with religious fundamentalism in the political sphere, cannot be divorced from the personal redemptive experience. Because religious fundamentalists “tend to depict revealed truth as whole unified and undifferentiated”,¹⁶⁶ the personal application of God’s law, the submission of self to the Divine Will, and the political application of sacred text are one and the same, as it is the redemptive formula for both the individual and society. The transcendent realm of the Divine, “as revealed and made normative for the religious community, alone provides *an irreducible basis for communal and personal identity*. Only an identity thus rooted is guaranteed to remain free from erosion, impenetrable, immune to substantial change, aloof from the vicissitudes of history and human reason.”¹⁶⁷ An identity thus rooted also allows for religious fundamentalists to experience identity as ontological, “as rooted in the very nature of being” beyond the reach of human temporal and spatial limitations and the relativising force of history.¹⁶⁸ This forms the basis for the conflation of the individual and collective identities of religious fundamentalists across time and space. Thus, a perceived attack on the sacred community is as much an attack on the individual as the two are inextricably linked. Because the individual and the sacred collectivity perceive themselves as divinely anointed or chosen, a perceived attack against either can also be read as an attack on Divinity itself. Rhetorical and actual religious violence committed by religious fundamentalists are “litmus tests separating true believers from outsiders”,¹⁶⁹ where the perpetrators of this violence are also indirectly saving themselves and giving their actions much

¹⁶⁵ Mary and Appleby, 817.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

greater import. They are shoring up and reaffirming to themselves and to others, their religious commitment and fervour, while binding themselves to battles past and those to come.

Due to the mimetic and syncretic relationship between traditional religions and political religions, it comes as no surprise that within right-wing extremism there exists many of the same functions that traditional religions and their extremist counterparts provide for their adherents. The ontological purpose offered by religion to the individual is not unlike that offered by right-wing extremism. Indeed, extremists often express the importance of the focus on the sacralised collectivity, its ability to provide the individual with purpose and a sense of well-being, in ways that are very religious:

In truth, an individual can never know real happiness without a sense of belonging: the feeling that a man or woman is part of a greater whole, which they care about and are willing to sacrifice for. If you deny people this preliminary condition of their existence, they will never reach their full potential; and at the same time by replacing instinctive urges with abstract conceptions you will destroy society which is dependent on unity.¹⁷⁰

There is an alternative, however. There is a purpose that can transform mere existence into real, creative *living* and give meaning to the life of the individual. Such purpose involves commitment to something greater than one's petty self. That something lies in the immanent reality manifest in race and blood. In the natural community of one's own kind and in the upward striving of Aryan mankind toward a better world, we recognize a purpose truly worthy of our highest aspiration and commitment [*sic*].¹⁷¹

It is not only individual happiness, belonging and purpose that extremists believe the sacralised community provides; it provides an alternative to the social status quo, a 'primordial' precondition or foundation for a 'healthy' functional society, one that situates right-wing extremists within the order outside themselves, but one that extremists believe cannot be

¹⁷⁰ Steve Stein, "A Political Discussion: National Obligation", *America's National Socialist Party*, <http://nsm88.org/articles/sstein2.html> (last accessed May 27, 2010).

¹⁷¹ The New Order, "Purpose" <http://www.theneworder.org/purpose.htm> (last accessed June 5, 2010)

replaced or substituted for any other societal foundation. Without this alternative individual extremists are denied the means to achieve a better world, happiness, belonging and purpose.

While it cannot boast redemptive transformation of religion, the monism of the extreme right is not reserved solely for the maintenance of the sacralised collectivity; it also promises to address the needs of the whole individual through the sacralised collectivity:

Whether we're speaking of art; music; myths; legends; government formations; or philosophies; the only ones capable of uplifting us, and maintaining our health, are those devised by our own kind. Let me go even further: the ability to find someone you can really communicate with, or a spouse who can provide a truly fulfilling relationship, is wholly dependent on our continued racial existence [*sic*].¹⁷²

Right-wing extremists too express their rejection of modern political values as motivated by their inability to provide for the whole individual. What these values promise to deliver for all, extremists perceived as being denied them. Because the values found in the modern liberal democracies of Europe and North America actually hamper individual extremists' attempts to provide existentially for themselves, the values of modern political democracies are seen not only as ineffectual but as treacherous:

This is how it should be, and there wouldn't be a problem if we weren't all forced to live together, and to accept similar criteria for what constitutes success and happiness. Under these conditions violence becomes a regrettable, but predictable occurrence. Here we see that it is the System – those presently in power – who work to destroy the diversity they claim to love so much [*sic*].¹⁷³

The insistence on the values associated with pluralism and liberalism are immediately recognisable as personally objectionable for individual right-wing extremists. It follows, that any value that does not lend itself to asserting the primacy of the sacralised collectivity felt,

¹⁷² Steve Stein, "Racial Fundamentals", *National Socialist Party*, "<http://nsm88.org/articles/sstein18> (last accessed, May 20, 2010)

¹⁷³ Ibid.

believed, lived and desired by right-wing extremists hampers the extremist's ability to use the sacralised community as the basis for self-actualisation.

Like religious extremism, right-wing extremism is partially defined by its "zealous attachment to a particular value".¹⁷⁴ This is apparent in many of the statements made by right-wing extremists, demonstrating the fervency of their beliefs and alluding to an idealism comparable to the religious idealism found within religious fundamentalism:

Fanaticism, ruthlessness and consistency must be the character traits of those who wish to join with us in the Aryan Nations. ... It shall only be these individuals who will be willing – and capable – to change the world in a significant way... To redress the imbalance caused by the Jew and their hubristic sycophants and restore this earth to a state of cosmic harmony."¹⁷⁵

However, it is the nature of the 'will of the people' that reveals how similar this form of political idealism is to idealism found within religious fundamentalism:

Wotan ... is the exclusive God of the Aryan Folk. He is an expression of the Will Of The Aryan Nation, an archetype, a repository of wisdom and an ancestor, deeply ingrained within our genetic memory.¹⁷⁶

The fundamental theology of Wotanism is the 2nd of the 88 Precepts as follows: "Whatever people's perception of God, or the Gods, or the motive force of the Universe might be, they can hardly deny that Nature and Nature's Laws are the work of, and therefore the intent of, that force." Since the first and highest Law of Nature is the preservation of one's own kind, then the 14 Words, i.e. "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White children" is a divine command of God, All-Father Wotan [*sic*].¹⁷⁷

The multiplicity of right-wing extremist ideologies in Europe and North America make it impossible to compare an individual's redemptive religious experience and the corresponding

¹⁷⁴ See note 37.

¹⁷⁵ Aryan Nations, "A Brief History: Legacy of Aryan Nations", <http://www.aryan-nations.org/about.htm> (last accessed March 30, 2010)

¹⁷⁶ David Lane, Katja Lane and Ron McVan, *Creed of Iron*, (ebook: Internet Archive, 2009) accessed at <http://www.archive.org/stream/CreedOfIron#page/n3/mode/2up> (last accessed June 13, 2010)

¹⁷⁷ David Lane, "Why Wotanism and the Pyramid Prophecy?", Free the Order <http://www.freethetheorder.org/DavidLane/whywotan.html> (last accessed April 3, 2010).

religious idealism, to any personal experience lived ubiquitously by all right-wing extremists that could account for their political idealism. However, because exclusive devotion to the sacralised collectivity promises the individual extremists a better and more complete life based on Truth espoused by, revealed to, and made normative within the sacralised collectivity, it serves as an irreducible basis for communal and personal modes of identification.

From the standpoint of right-wing extremists, the preservation of the sacralised community is not only a social or political project, but one that touches upon every aspect of their individual lives; "...you must embrace the initiative to become an independent agent of the Aryan Nations, which has now transcended the status of being an organization and rather formed itself as a movement, a way of life and a crusade against the jew and all who serve them."¹⁷⁸ The centrality of the sacralised collectivity causes the extremist not to "experience himself as the active bearer of his own powers and richness but as an impoverished 'thing' dependent on power outside of himself, unto whom he has projected his living substance."¹⁷⁹ Because individual extremists are promised self-actualisation through devotion to sacralised community, it is not surprising that this manifests itself in, and is expressed by extremists as a subsumption of individual identity to the collective identity:

I can look at the facts and I can come to know the truth, as much as it can be known in order to do the one thing I was born to do - preserve my family, my community and my people. Like rushing into the burning house to save your wife and child, like rising from the trenches to preserve your comrades, and like defending your right to believe, to worship, to associate, to demonstrate and to advance the cause of one's own race, it is our reason for being that submits the individual to the greater good.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Aryan Nations.

¹⁷⁹ Kornhauser, 108, taken from Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society* (New York: Rinehart, 1955), 124.

¹⁸⁰ Marc Moran, "Relics" *Vanguard News Network*, June 29, 2002, <http://www.vanguardnewsnetwork.com/v1/index371.htm> (last accessed, April 3, 2010)

The comprehensive design of the conspiracy fashions the way extremists understand all human action, history and the effect these have had to produce their personal conditions. By informing the understanding of the world around the extremist, the conspiracy theory also provides the necessary fodder for extremists to fashion out of their collective will ideological weapons against a hostile world and develop an 'extremist' response to social issues:

It was only with the advent of insidious liberalism in the last two centuries that the Whiteman began to question his reason to be. The plague of equality and democracy, the cancerous twins of liberalism gave birth to an even more hideous monster Marxism. They are all from the same evil stable, all children of a Darker force. White Nationalism in its political form as expressed by the British People's Party in Britain today represents all that is good in our folk fighting for its survival against all that is unnatural and evil [sic].¹⁸¹

Personal doubt, failure, unhappiness are all attributable to forces outside the extremist. It is these same forces that right-wing extremists hold responsible for usurping the primacy of the collective will and threaten the survival of the sacralised community. Complete personal happiness, achievement and self-assurance can only truly be made possible for extremists through the restoration of the primacy of the sacralised collectivity.

As with religious fundamentalists, the fate of the individual and the sacred community are one in the same. In employing rhetorical and actual violence to protect and defend the sacralised collectivity, individual right-wing extremists also protect and defend an identity that they see as crucial to being. For individual extremists, protecting and defending the sacralised community is life-affirming: "We fight not for revenge, but for our freedom. We fight not to destroy any people, but for the sacred task of our own survival."¹⁸² The violence employed by individual extremists affirms their continued existence in the face of great adversity, their

¹⁸¹ "Eternal Creed", *British People's Party*, <http://www.bpp.org.uk/eternalcreed.html> (last accessed June 9, 2010)

¹⁸² David Duke, "Is Russia the Key to White Survival?", [davidduke.com](http://www.davidduke.com), October 23, 2004
http://www.davidduke.com/general/is-russia-the-key-to-white-survival_18.html (last accessed June 9, 2010)

strength and their resolve despite the ‘evil cabal’ to destroy them. In addition, violent acts and rhetoric allow extremists to personalise and actively engage in the battle between Good and Evil, and strike a blow against personifications of their enemies or symbols attributed to their enemies. In some small measure, violence gives right-wing extremists the tools to fashion individual lives for themselves through the defence and protection of the sacralised collectivity:

Never support immigrants. Just try to show that you don’t like them. That creates the atmosphere of hate. And they see that they cannot be here and that their children cannot be here.... Every moment, every single moment, write about it, think about it. Don’t just sit like a lazy rat in a hole doing nothing. Take your fists and make your life.¹⁸³

Rhetoric and actual violence allows right-wing extremists to cease being victim of, and responsible for the socio-political realities in which they find themselves. Violence allows individual extremists to author their own personal destinies and fulfil the one meant for the sacralised community.

The importance of the sacralised collectivity to individual extremists allows devotion to play a large part in separating ‘true’ or ‘real’ extremists from others: "You can't fight for something you don't love, and you can't love something you've got no knowledge of".¹⁸⁴ Rhetorical and actual violence, as acts of love and devotion, permits extremists to demonstrate unquestionably their commitment to the sacralised community. Anyone who does not express this devotion through actions is either considered by right-wing extremists as part of the ‘ignorant’ majority, an enemy of the sacralised collectivity, or despite profession, someone who extremists see as having no place among them in the sacralised collectivity:

Let the Folk join us or stand aside, for we intend to win. But, let the losers, the nay Sayers [*sic*], the hobbyists and the shirkers be aware that on the day of justice, it will be found that we have long memories. Those who did not fight for a place in the sun for

¹⁸³ Christof Putzel, “From Russia with Hate”.

¹⁸⁴ Julia Harte, “Kinder Gentler Skinheads”, Philadelphia City Paper, October 14, 2009 <http://citypaper.net/articles/2009/10/15/keystone-state-skinheads> (last accessed June 9, 2010)

White children will not live in that place after Ragnarok. To allow them to live among us would be a disgrace to... all who have sacrificed their lives, their freedom, their time or their wealth for the Fourteen Words.¹⁸⁵

Anyone, including the ‘ignorant’ majority, who does not follow up belief with action, will be disposed of as an enemy after the final victory of Good versus Evil, here epitomised through the Norse myth of Ragnarok. Perhaps the most symbolic expressions of violence are reserved for members who are perceived as having failed in living total and complete devotion to the sacralised collectivity. Not only will these members be destroyed along with the enemy, but their punishment will be exacted by and in the name of the very people and ‘sacred’ object they are perceived to have failed. Punishing members of the sacralised collectivity for inaction or other offences affirms the ‘will of the people’ as an absolute standard, and bolsters the power of the sacralised collectivity to confer, or deprive its members of a life worth living:

Instead of making excuses for scum, like the blacks do- we should wish sure and swift justice on our own race, when it disgraces our morality.¹⁸⁶

In my opinion, anyone who gives such aid to non-Aryans is committing a treasonous act against our Race and should be publicly hanged...Be that as it may,... a generation will come to maturity that will throw off the yoke of the cultural distorters and bring about that great and glorious day that comes when our lands are free from all non-Whites and we hang all our Race traitors.¹⁸⁷

The importance of violence Juergensmeyer describes within the religious fundamentalist paradigm aptly sums up the personal meaning behind the rhetorical and actual violence of the extreme right. It allows individual extremist to “know who they are, why they have suffered, by whose hand they have been humiliated, and at what expense they have persevered”; it not only

¹⁸⁵ David Eden Lane, “Let’s Win”, Free the Order, <http://www.freetheorder.org/DavidLane/letswin.html> (last accessed April 3, 2010).

¹⁸⁶ Richard Scutari, “Interview with Richard Scutari”, interview by Peter Eriksson for Wotansvolk/Sweden, <http://www.freetheorder.org/scutariinterview.html> (last accessed June 17, 2010)

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

provides individuals with the hope of victory but the means to achieve it.¹⁸⁸ Depriving individual extremists of the hope that rhetorical and actual violence accords them is almost tantamount to depriving them of hope itself.

Although right-wing extremism and religious fundamentalism share many similarities, right-wing extremist violence cannot emulate the same personal redemptive system found in religious fundamentalism. As such, there is a striking difference between the personal nature of right-wing extremist and religious fundamentalist violence. Within religious fundamentalism, the division between what ‘is’ and ‘ought to be’ is bridged through the application of sacred texts, which provide objective knowledge on how it is one should behave.¹⁸⁹ While the revelation of Divine Will is normalised within the community of believers, it clearly emanates from a source outside the individual and the sacred community, which makes the relationship between the Divine will and the fundamentalist linear: Divine Will is gleaned from sacred texts; the revelation of that will is normalised within the sacred community; and the individual submits himself to the Divine Will revealed and normalised by the sacred community. Although the transcendent realm of the Divine provides the basis for personal and communal identity, the redemptive experience emanates solely from the Divine. Whether violent rhetoric or action is used to protect the socio-economic standing of the sacred community, to impose Divine Will, to bolster faith, to demonstrate devotion, or to protect the communal and individual modes of identification, fundamentalist violence can be reduced to the desire to protect sacred things in the temporal realm, things made sacred through Divine revelation.

Right-wing extremism cannot boast of a redemptive experience of the same weight and import as is found within the religious fundamentalist paradigm. In comparing Divine will to the

¹⁸⁸ Juergensmeyer, *Terror and the Mind of God*, 158

¹⁸⁹ Garvey, 19.

‘will of the people’, the sacred community to the sacralised community, the religious extremist to the right-wing extremist, the clear distinction between the elements found within religious fundamentalism cannot be found within right-wing extremism. Within right-wing extremism, ‘divine will’, the mores, norms and ontological purpose are all manufactured and dictated by the sacralised collectivity and not from a proximate source outside the community or individual extremists. What is more, individual extremists are composite parts of the sacralised community, the sacred object, and the aggregation of their wills becomes the ‘will of the people’. Thus, the relationship between the ‘divine will’ and individual right-wing extremists is tautological:

W.O.T.A.N.'S Temple shall be a living embodiment of the 14 Words and a sanctuary for those most sacred words. The new name of "GOD" shall be written in "A WHITE STONE". Stone by Stone, we must build the TEMPLE OF W.O.T.A.N [*sic*].¹⁹⁰

Within this particular right-wing extremist tradition, ‘WOTAN’ is the ‘exclusive God’ of the sacralised collectivity, and is also an expression of the will of the sacralised collectivity.¹⁹¹ As a divine commandment of ‘WOTAN’,¹⁹² the ‘14 Words’ are lived by extremists themselves, whose collective and individual experiences should embody the ‘14 Words’ and provide them sanctuary. These individuals constitute the ‘White Stones’ upon which the name of ‘God’ is inscribed and the stuff that is used to build the ‘Temple of WOTAN’. The ‘Temple of WOTAN’, is both the sacralised collectivity and where the divine decree is housed. Submission to this divine ordinance requires submission to ‘will of the people’, which is both the divine ordinance itself, and emanates from the collectivity where the divine ordinance is normalised. Although different manifestations of right-wing extremism will express this tautology differently, the sacralised community that extremists seek to protect has been constituted and

¹⁹⁰ All Fater Wotan, Homepage, <http://www.allfatherwotan.org/>

¹⁹¹ See note 174, Creed of Iron.

¹⁹² See note, 175, Free the Order.

made 'sacred' by their will alone. Their will exists as more than just the final authority on all things good, just and moral, but as the Good, Truth and Justice themselves. Thus, within the right-wing extremist paradigm personal and social salvation is reduced to 'do what we say'.

Violence as a Pharmakon

Rene Girard takes a completely different view of the purpose of religious violence. For him, the centrality of violence in religion is found in an actual killing of ‘consequence’ for the community; this act that harkens back to the beginning of the community of believers, of the religion itself, cannot be erased; this first communal murder, whose legacy threatens the very existence of the community, is draped in symbolism and wrapped in myth and relived in the form of salvic rituals of killing.¹⁹³ Contained in Girard’s thesis on religious violence are three central themes: sacrifice, mimetic desire, and the surrogate victim mechanism. For Girard, actual manifestations of violence originate with people, not within an ideology, and violence is a permanent feature of human relations that religion was born out of to control.¹⁹⁴ Girard sees sacrifice as the primary sacred act, “the most crucial and fundamental of rites”.¹⁹⁵ The function of the sacrificial ritual is to “purify violence; that is to ‘trick’ violence into spending itself on victims whose death will provoke no reprisals.”¹⁹⁶ In Girard’s view, the sacrificial rite is a mechanism for banishing intra-communal violence, the lingering spectre of the communal murder, as it allows members of the religious community to spend feelings of hostility and thus, by ridding the community of these feelings, social cohesion is not jeopardised.¹⁹⁷

At the root of intra-communal violence is a concept Girard terms ‘mimetic desire’, which expresses itself through “a desire imitated from the desire of a model who thereby runs the risk of becoming a rival for the same object of desire.”¹⁹⁸ Imitation may very well be the highest

¹⁹³ Burton Mack, “Introduction: Religion and Ritual”, *Violent Origins*, ed. Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1987), 18.

¹⁹⁴ Rene Girard, “Violence and Religion: Cause and Effect?” *Heghog Review*, March 24, 2004, accessed at http://www.mimetictheory.org/bios/articles/Girad_Violence_and_religion.pdf (last accessed June 7, 2010)

¹⁹⁵ Mack, 7

¹⁹⁶ Rene Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1995), 36.

¹⁹⁷ Rene Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, 3.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 3.

form of flattery but when the imitator and the person idolized fix their sights on the same object, the ensuing rivalry and competition may very well rend the cohesion of the religious group:

Whenever he [the disciple] sees himself closest to the supreme goal, he comes into violent conflict with a rival. By a mental shortcut that is both eminently logical and self-defeating, he convinces himself that the violence itself is the most distinctive attribute of this supreme goal! Ever afterward, violence and desire will be linked in his mind, and the presence of violence will invariably waken desire....¹⁹⁹

Mimetic desire reproduces itself as it loops in both the person imitated and the person idolized as their rival desires feed off each other: “the imitator becomes the model of his model, and the model the imitator of his imitator.”²⁰⁰ Because veneration and rejection, mimesis and difference are experienced together, they transform the image of the imitator/rival into that of a ‘monstrous double’, where violence marks the completion of this transformation.²⁰¹ The danger of mimetic desire lies not only in that it invariably leads to murder but that it is contagious: it is not only desiring that is subject to mimesis, but the violent rivalry as well.²⁰² In order to dispel the tension caused by mimetic desire, a symbolic rendering of the rival – the ‘monstrous double’, is created that the community can imbue with the negativity associated with the rivalry and conquer, but who can also be assimilated. Without this symbolic rendering that can be destroyed, conquered and assimilated, the religious community enters a ‘crisis’, where violence runs amok and violent urges are taken out on perceived rivals within the community. A sacrificial crisis occurs when the community no longer has convincing symbols to dispel violence.²⁰³ It is a “mimetic escalation and it is of such a nature that it takes a tremendous shock, something tremendously violent itself, to interrupt” the religious mechanisms used to control

¹⁹⁹ Mack, 16

²⁰⁰ Girard, “Violence and Religion”

²⁰¹ Mack, 9

²⁰² Girard, “Violence and Religion”

²⁰³ Juergensmeyer, “Editor’s Introduction”, 4

violence,²⁰⁴ whereas a mimetic crisis “is when people become undifferentiated. [...] What I call a mimetic crisis is a situation of conflict so intense that on both sides people act the same way and talk the same way even though, or because, they are more and more hostile to each other.”²⁰⁵

Different religious traditions carry different sacrificial and mimetic rites that ensure the sublimation of violence produced by mimetic desire, but for Girard, it remains that sacrificial rites to quell violence are rooted in an actual violent event, and that these rites are crucial to making violence licit:

The sacrificial act is too rich in concrete details to be only a simulation of something that never actually occurred. This assertion can be made without contradicting... that the act is a simulated performance designed to offer a substitute satisfaction. Sacrifice takes the place of an act that nobody under normal cultural conditions would dare or even desire to commit...²⁰⁶

Not just any sacrifice will suffice. The surrogate victim, the member of the community that is arbitrarily and spontaneously chosen by the community to bear the weight of the communal sin, must also have certain qualities: the victim must be chosen unanimously as the ‘guilty’ party; be recognisable as a surrogate of the guilty parties and/or the group itself; and must also be vulnerable and unable to avenge his own death either through proximate relations or important communal ties.²⁰⁷ Once the victim is chosen, he is treated as a criminal, expelled from the community and killed. Thus, intra-communal violence is contained and cooperation within the community can continue. There is an element of concealment that is required for the violence that results from mimetic desire spending itself on a surrogate victim and for only the beneficial aspects of the sacrifice to be remembered. Without this concealment, the community would not

²⁰⁴ Rene Girard, “Interview with Rene Girard”, *Anthropoetics*, 2 no1 (June 1996) accessed at <http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap0201/interv.htm> (last accessed on June 13, 2010)

²⁰⁵ Rene Girard, “Christianity Will be Victorious but Only in Defeat: Interview with Rene Girard”, *First Things*, July 26, 2009, accessed at <http://www.firstthings.com/onthesquare/2009/07/christianity-will-be-victorious-but-only-in-defeat> (last accessed June 13, 2010)

²⁰⁶ Mack, 19.

²⁰⁷ Mack 8.

be able to extricate itself from the cycle of reciprocal violence. Because myth – pre-critical literature that views violence only in retrospect, and ritual – substitution of some prior event, provide concealment and substitution within the religious system,²⁰⁸ they are among important apotropaic artefacts. “[S]tructured so as to hide the mechanisms of violence”, and “designed so as to conceal even themselves”, mimetic desire, the underlying necessity of sacrifice, and the surrogate victim mechanism are unrecognisable to those caught up in the cycle of using violence to banish violence.²⁰⁹ According to one interpretation, this displacement of guilt “accounts for the necessity of the delusion that determines religious mentality.”²¹⁰

Though Girard presents his thesis on religious violence as whole and unified, mimetic desire, sacrificial displacement and the role of the surrogate victim are conceptually unique. Seeing the function of sacrifice as a means to symbolically displace violence does not necessarily entail accepting its root in mimetic desire, just as mimetic desire is neither tied to sacrificial displacement or a sacrificial crisis.²¹¹ The usefulness of Girard’s thesis in understanding right-wing extremist violence lies in its explanatory power of apotropaic violence and its hidden mechanisms that extremists are not aware of and therefore cannot articulate directly. Thus, these ‘hidden’ purposes of violence – to destroy a mimetic rival, to sacrifice the surrogate victim and ultimately control communal violence – can also be found within right-wing extremism, even if the elements do not fit together as neatly or elegantly as Girard’s presentation of the purpose of religious violence.

The most obvious application of Girard’s thesis is to see the violence of the extreme right as a mechanism to quell intra-communal violence within the sacralised collectivity. The

²⁰⁸ Ibid 16.

²⁰⁹ Ibid 11.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 9.

²¹¹ Juergensmeyer, “Editor’s Introduction”, 4

insistence on cultural uniformity and the implementation of the ‘will of the people’ both for the individual and in society-at-large invariably facilitates mimesis among individual extremists and within the sacralised community. In desiring the same things, members of the sacralised community develop rivalling desires for the same object, and become rivals. Within the ideology of the extreme right, the conspiracy theory provides an outlet, the enemy of the sacralised community, that is constructed in a manner to imbibe the violence resulting from mimetic desire within the community. The design and scope of the conspiracy theory, along with the moralism and monism of right-wing extremism, allow for anything and anyone perceived as hostile towards the sacralised collectivity and its goals, both of which extremists see as crucial for survival, to be construed as the enemy, the antithesis to the sacralised community. The immediate impending danger posed by the enemy, provides an excuse for right-wing extremists to deescalate rivalries, schisms and discord within the sacralised community in order to better protect themselves. In addition, because violence against the enemy is sanctioned, individual extremists can use the enemy as a sacrificial victim, the bearer of their mimetic frustrations and violent urges. The demonising, mythologizing and the dramatisation that is required to create the enemies of the sacralised community, transform the enemy from simple sacrificial victim into the surrogate victim.

Relying on his analysis of myths, Girard notes four aspects of the relationship between the surrogate victim and the sacralised community that seeks to kill it.²¹² First, “members of the sacralised community seem terrified by their prospective victims, concerned solely with protecting themselves from this frightful monster”. To the objective observer, these victims are not frightening at all but rather helpless in the face of a hostile mob. Second, the crimes

²¹² Girard, “Violence and Religion”.

“attributed to the surrogate victims are obvious stereotypes that reappear in myth after myth, such as rape, infanticide, bestiality, and the like.” Far from being the unique or realistic insight into the surrogate victim, “they are banal accusations of the type still bandied around by mobs on a rampage”. Third, the victims of this collective violence are physically ‘impaired’ or ‘damaged’. The presence of some immediately ‘identifiable’ characteristic draws attention of the sacralised collectivity to potential victims. Finally, Girard identifies that in myths, there is a preponderance of surrogate victims who are identified by the sacralised community as foreign.

These four traits bear an uncanny similarity to the manner in which right-wing extremist characterise their primary and secondary enemies. Conspiratorial thought primes right-wing extremists to fear their collective enemies as dangerous, immoral, violent, uncivilised and sometimes less than human. The attribution of past and present crimes or ‘sins’ – theft, drug peddling, miscegenation, the spread of infectious diseases, rape, murder and general social degradation to name a few – that aggrieve the sacralised community but also offend its sense of morality, is a deliberate distortion of history and present circumstances designed to legitimise violence against individuals, groups and institutions. These individuals, groups and institutions cannot rightly be held responsible for the crimes and ‘sins’ they are accused of and are objectively innocent of these particular wrongdoings. As Girard points out, in attributing these crimes to the collective enemies of the sacralised community, right-wing extremists are licensed to inflict violence – rhetorical and actual, upon them. The stereotypical crimes and ‘sins’ conferred upon the collective enemies of the sacralised community are depicted by right-wing extremists as a direct result of ‘undesirable’ or ‘unequal’ immutable traits found in the very being of their collective enemies. Extremists see their collective enemies as degenerate in their very constitution and depend on stereotypical characterisations to readily identify and point them

out. Invariably, these stereotypical depictions of the seemingly immutable traits of collective enemies, allow right-wing extremists to label them as ‘foreign’: they are not of the sacralised collectivity, nor can or do they belong.

The manner in which the enemies of the sacralised community are created fulfils the primary criteria Girard lays out for surrogate victims. Those labelled as enemies of the sacralised collectivity are marginal in the eyes of right-wing extremists. As they are not members of the sacralised collectivity, they are unable to avenge the violence inflicted upon them and therefore extremists fear no violent reprisal from within the sacralised community. For those scripted as the collective enemies of the sacralised community, their blamelessness and innocence in regards to the crimes and ‘sins’ they are charged with, is required for them to be suitable and perfect surrogate victims. Through their destruction, their innocence can be absorbed and absolve the truly guilty parties. The moralism and monism within the ideology of the extreme right guarantees that the collective enemies of the sacralised collectivity are unanimously chosen and that the use of violence is sanctioned. These features are also responsible for the creation of an ‘us and them’ dichotomy, which allows members of the sacralised community to symbolically assimilate the inherent innocence of their victims while they conquer and destroy everything that they ‘are not’ or rather everything that they should not be, such that: extremists are right but the enemy are wrong; extremists are preservers but the enemy are destroyers; extremists are moral but the enemy are immoral; extremists are peaceful but the enemy are violent; extremists are industrious, honest and orderly but the enemy are lazy, dishonest and anarchic; extremists want to live but the enemy want them to die; extremists will be victorious and the enemy will be destroyed.

One can reject mimesis as the basis for the displacement of violence within the sacralised collectivity and instead replace it with mimetic crisis:

In a mimetic crisis, religious and cultural differences are felt to be slipping away as a result of an invisible but omnipresent influence. All efforts to hold on to the remaining differences and to recapture the lost ones increase the tension and conflicts, which arise less and less with other groups grounded in 'similar' traditions and more and more with those who hold to the opposite attitude, those for whom the crisis is caused by the differences themselves and who think that salvation lies in doing away with them entirely.²¹³

From this perspective, the individual right-wing extremists as constituent parts of the sacralised collectivity and their collective enemies must be more similar than different to realise the worth in the things they both covet, especially if individual extremists believe that they both are willing to use violence to obtain it. Again, the rivalry inherent to mimetic desire forms the basis of conspiratorial thought. The enemy desires the destruction of the sacralised collectivity because it covets what rightfully 'belongs' to the sacralised collectivity, if not the sacralised community itself. In order for the members of the sacralised collectivity to fully enjoy their 'birthright', to reclaim their 'rightful' social position, to replace the current socio-political order with their aggregated will, to obtain their supreme goal, the usurping 'monstrous doubles' must absolutely be destroyed. The presence of these 'monstrous doubles' links the personal and collective desires of right-wing extremists to violence. Without violence, individual extremists desire in vain and without their collective desire right-wing extremist violence serves no purpose to the sacralised collectivity.

Without a sacrificial substitution, mimetic desire is a zero-sum game in which rivals must become more similar in order to guarantee the possibility of finally obtaining the object desired.

²¹³ Rene Girard and Mark R. Anspach, "A Response: Reflections from the perspective of Mimetic Theory", *Violence and the Sacred in the Modern World*, ed. Mark Juergensmeyer (London: Frank Cass & Company Limited, 1992), 142.

Girard believes that the intensity of the conflict and the growing hostilities between the rivals causes both sides to act the same way, talk the same way and relate to each other in the same way.²¹⁴ As the enemy changes and evolves to find novel ways of destroying the sacralised collectivity, extremists believe that they too must evolve and change to meet these new challenges. Far from amplifying differences, the conflict makes right-wing extremists more like their collective enemies than perhaps they would care to acknowledge. The ‘traditionalism’ longed for by extremists is in actuality not so traditional in content, but neo-traditional. Howbeit, with their collective enemies scripted as the ‘monstrous double’ of both their individual selves and the sacralised collectivity, extremists still can and do intimate the presence of the model-imitator mimetic loop without needing to acknowledge it directly. In the view of extremists, it is the enemy that forces their hand, that has caused the rivalry to escalate to the point of violence: extremists cannot coexist with the enemy because it will not coexist with them; extremists cannot compromise because the enemy will not compromise; extremists are violent because the enemy is violent.

In both applications of Girard’s thesis, the victims and target of rhetorical and actual right-wing extremist violence are negative symbolic renderings of the sacralised collectivity as its collective enemies. As surrogate victims or as usurping ‘monstrous doubles’, right-wing extremists create the collective enemies of the sacralised collectivity in such a manner that these symbols can be destroyed and conquered. In order for the surrogate victim to be an acceptable sacrifice upon which the collective violence of right-wing extremists can spend itself without reprisal, or for the destruction of the ‘monstrous double’ to stay violence for a time, the difference between extremists and their constituted collective enemies cannot be so great in

²¹⁴ Girard, “Christianity will be Victorious”

reality. Without an underlying bond between right-wing extremists and the victims of their rhetorical and actual violence, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for right-wing extremists to fashion a credible opponent or a credible threat from their victims and targets. Nor would vitriolic rhetoric and brutal attacks against person, institutions or property be given such weighty importance by right-wing extremists. In order for the destruction of the surrogate victim and the ‘monstrous double’ to be effective in quelling intra-communal violence within the sacralised collectivity, the true nature and identity of the ‘surrogate’ victim and ‘the monstrous double’ cannot be made evident and their symbolic importance must remain hidden or at least veiled to individual right-wing extremists if they are to remain effective apotropaic artefacts.

The application of Girard’s theory of mimetic desire to right-wing extremist violence reveals that the delusion necessary for the displacement of guilt that characterises the religious mentality is also present in the conspiracy theory and right-wing extremism. The innocence of the surrogate victim clearly demonstrates a displacement of guilt. Because of the mimetic loop, the guilt attributed to the ‘monstrous double’ is something that should be equally borne between the mimetic rivals and not by one party alone. The ‘monstrous double’ is not only responsible for its part of the resulting conflict, but extremists depict it as responsible for theirs as well. Delusion further plagues the violence of the extreme right in the belief that the sacrifice of the surrogate victim and the destruction of the ‘monstrous double’ will finally guarantee the sacralised community the absence of guilt and the violence that invariably comes from it. If all of the collective enemies of the sacralised collectivity are destroyed, more would have to be created in order to quell intra-communal violence. The symbolic renderings of the surrogate victim and the ‘monstrous double’ would have to be fashioned from members of the sacralised community that it once protected from violence. This is in accordance with Girard’s assertion

that religion, compete with its symbols and its rites, not only emanate from communal violence and not the other way around, but also mirrors it. Right-wing extremists cannot constitute and protect the sacralised collectivity without an enemy. Who or what is used to constitute the enemy of the sacralised community is of no import as long as the violence is able to recognise the substitution and spend itself on the substitute. In this sense, extremists and their collective enemies must be part of the same greater whole and not worlds apart.

Conclusion

Right-wing extremism continues to have social and political relevance. The (re)emergence of parties, organisations and movements labelled as extreme right in the last two decades perhaps makes the study of post-bellum right-wing extremism in Europe and North America more apropos today than ever before. Although one may not speak of right-wing extremist violence as statistically significant, given the population size of Europe and North America, the legislative and NGO responses to the growing social and political presence of the extreme right demonstrates why the extreme right is worthy of study. This also partially explains why the violence inherent to the extreme right is also worthy of examination. The multiplicity of definitions surrounding right-wing extremism and associated concepts, its various manifestations, not to mention the different socio-historical contexts from whence these manifestations arise, complicate the study of something that exists simultaneously as a buzz word and as an established academic concept. If right-wing extremism remains a vague notion, without a firm grasp of what is meant by ‘right-wing extremism’, it is impossible to divine a purpose for its violence that is not effuse. The importance of clearly labelling right-wing extremism lies in that the definition allows for a clearer view of the goals and purpose associated with its rhetoric and actions. How one understands the extreme right is part and parcel in understanding its violence.

Regardless of the conceptual ambiguity surrounding right-wing extremism as a concept, this thesis begins with presenting a definition of what right-wing extremism is as an ideology, speaking of it as a collection of features and exploring how these features work to produce a particular worldview. In preferring Ramet’s definition of the ideology to others, right-wing

extremism emerges as a preoccupation with restoring at all costs the ‘traditional’ character of the community, an intolerance of all things ‘foreign’ or ‘alien’ to the ‘traditional’ community based on cultural irrationality, and a hostility to popular notions of sovereignty and rule.

The features mentioned by Ramet are echoed by Kornhauser who explains how these ideological features function together to create a particular type of political community that employs a direct style of civic activism, emanating from the particular understanding of politics and society. The insistence on cultural uniformity, the exclusionary populism based on the primacy of the popular will, the de-legitimising of dissent, and the rejection of the legitimacy of the norms and institutions that govern political behaviour in pluralist liberal democracies, found within the various manifestations of right-wing extremist ideologies, make violence a legitimate and most effective tool for right-wing extremists to achieve their goals; it is a means of persuasion, an arbiter of disputes, a means to implement the collective will rooted in a uniform collective culture, and a means to do away with anything that breaks with that particular culture and/or will.

The insistence of the absolute authority of the Will of the People in all things, and the monism and moralism that follows, transforms politics and society into a veritable battleground of Good versus Evil. This particular understanding of politics and society creates what Gentile terms a political religion, exclusive and fundamentalist in nature, where all considerations are centered around a secular entity that is treated as sacred. The violence right-wing extremists employ is a form of civic activism that seeks not only to defend the sacralised collectivity, but also to transform the social context in which they exist according to the primacy of the ‘will of the people’. Using Juergensmeyer’s study of religious fundamentalist violence, two additional

features appear: the conspiracy theory and the socially-assembled enemy, which inform the purpose of right-wing extremist violence and its targets.

Destroying the enemies of the sacralised collectivity and implementing the ‘will of the people’ by any means necessary is the extremist solution to all social and political problems faced by the sacralised collectivity and the key to saving the sacralised community from certain destruction. Justifying violence as defence allows right-wing extremists to expunge unwanted social elements that are ‘responsible’ for and embodiments of social pathologies, to stop further loss of social standing and resources belonging ‘exclusively’ to the sacralised collectivity and to thwart the evil cabal to destroy the sacralised community. Violence as a tool for social transformation works in many ways. It seeks to overthrow and destroy current systems of government and replace it instead with the ‘will of the people’. It seeks to destroy the current social and political order that not only gave birth to the social pathologies plaguing the sacralised collectivity, but also allowed them to flourish. It seeks to restore the sacralised collectivity to its ‘rightful’ social standing and secure with it the power, resources and influence associated with that social standing.

Violence and the promise of violence also offer extremists an important measure of social control in that they can violently create and maintain situational and geographic enclaves where their world-view dominates. Within these situational and geographical enclaves, right-wing extremists are able to create models of their larger socio-political aspirations. These enclaves in which the sacralised collectivity is protected and where the socio-political order has been transformed according to the ‘will of the people’, demonstrates how the defensive and transformative agendas of right-wing extremists are interrelated. Within the current socio-political order, right-wing extremists are expected to coexist with those that they have designated

as their enemies, which they see as evil and responsible for all their troubles. In order to truly defend the sacralised collectivity, the socio-political order must be transformed to prevent the evil cabal to destroy the sacralised collectivity from ever being realised, and transformed to preclude coexistence of any kind. Only through the destruction of the enemies of the sacralised community and the expunging of unwanted social elements, values, ideas and principles can the sacralised collectivity be truly defended and the socio-political order transformed according to the exclusive will of extremists. Violence guarantees that right-wing extremists can achieve both at once.

Although the sacralised community is at the heart of the civic activism of right-wing extremists, the sacralised collectivity is more than just a political community or a political entity. It is a sacred object of faith that is venerated, commanding absolute loyalty, reverence and devotion. Through total devotion to the sacralised collectivity, individual extremists are promised happiness, belonging and a purpose that allows them to situate themselves in an order outside themselves. In basing all of human activity around the sacralised community, extremists are given the means to provide an alternative to the social status quo under which they now ‘languish’, a ‘primordial’ precondition or foundation for a healthy functional society, and one that situates right-wing extremists at the heart of the cosmic battle between Good and Evil. Without this alternative, individual extremists are denied the means to achieve a better world, happiness, belonging and purpose. Because the community at the centre of right-wing extremism is expressed and experienced as sacrosanct and inviolable, the violence inherent to the ideology of the extreme right is an important ‘religious’ rite that extremists are required and compelled to perform. As part of the liturgy to the sacralised community, violence as a rite is not

only an important personal ritual but a ritual of the utmost importance to the preservation of the sacralised collectivity.

The rhetorical and actual violence employed by the right-wing extremist individuals allow them to defend the sacralised community, collective and individual modes of identification, all of which extremists see as crucial for being. Thus, right-wing extremist violence is life-affirming. This violence allows right-wing extremists to unequivocally affirm their continued existence despite great adversity, which they see as a testament to their strength and their resolve. In addition, violent acts and rhetoric allow extremists to personalise and actively engage in the battle between Good and Evil. By violently engaging with the world around them, right-wing extremists cease to be victims of and responsible for a socio-political order they see as corrupt and beyond repair. Violence allows right-wing extremists to collectively and individually embrace a purpose and a destiny. Violence not only makes the ‘will of the people’ an absolute socio-political standard, but an absolute personal one as well. Violence is a sure-fire method for ensuring that individual devotion and loyalty remain unquestionable, while its victims serve as an example to others how imperative this ‘true’ and ‘complete’ devotion is. Violence not only protects the sacralised community from without, but also constitutes it from within.

Although the syncretic and mimetic relationship between religious fundamentalism and right-wing extremism is useful to understanding the purpose and the justifications given to right-wing extremism violence, there is a fundamental difference between the nature of the ‘sacred’ objects religious fundamentalist violence and right-wing extremist violence aim to protect. This distinction between the nature of the ‘sacred’ objects religious fundamentalist violence and right-wing extremist violence aim to protect is significant for two reasons. Firstly, because the

legitimacy of religious and right-wing extremist violence is drawn from different sources, responses to right-wing and religious extremist violence must be formulated differently if these responses are to be intelligible and significant for right-wing and religious extremists. Divine ordinances gleaned from sacred texts provide religious extremists with the means to justify their violence using an objective source. Even if the ordinances emanating from the source of revelation are seen to be twisted to better suit the socio-political aspirations of religious extremists, it stands that religious extremists believe that the rightness or wrongness of their violence cannot be judged in a meaningful manner by secular standards. Nevertheless, it is possible to challenge the legitimacy of extremist violence from within a particular religious ideology, because religious extremists submit to a will outside themselves. The objective source of religious revelation allows orthodoxy to challenge orthopraxy and for doctrinal exegesis to inform matters of practice. No matter how different they are in content and practice, religious extremism originates from a religious tradition, making it possible to challenge and delegitimise the violence of the religious extremists without completely doing away with the religious ideological framework.

The radical humanistic nature of right-wing extremism, in comparison to religious extremism, makes a challenge to the violence of the extreme right nearly impossible to mount from within the ideology. The will to which right-wing extremists submit themselves and to which they seek to submit others, is their own. The sacralised community and its exclusive popular will are constituted and made sacred by extremists themselves. There is no objective source of 'revelation' from which an extremist or an outsider could question the legitimacy of violence as a response. Because right-wing extremists answer only to themselves, are focused solely on the sacralised community they are a constituent part of, and ascribe to a revisionist

historical view, there is little inside right-wing extremist ideology that could be scrutinised by an outsider in a manner that could be accepted by extremists as a legitimate questioning of violence or the manner in which it is justified. While not all extremists or extremist organisations are violent or openly condone violence, non-violence remains a strategic consideration rather than a firmly held principle. Even for individual right-wing extremists, a principled stance against violence could easily end in them being treated as enemies and becoming victims of the very violence they rejected. Because dissent, difference and non-conformity transgress the collective will and are perceived as dangerous, they are not suffered by the sacralised community and individual right-wing extremists. To challenge the legitimacy of violence within the right-wing extremist paradigm is tantamount to challenging the very foundations of being.

Secondly, if Girard is right that violence is an ever-present feature of human relations, although right-wing extremism is not a religious phenomenon, government and politics as a means of dealing with the ‘kill or be killed’ violence associated with the pre-governmental ‘State of Nature’ is strikingly similar to the intra-communal violence religion was created to drive out. The apotropaic nature of both right-wing extremist and religious violence is undeniable given how both types of violence are perceived and justified as crucial to protecting their respective communities and dealing with their respective enemies. Although the mechanisms that allow both forms of violence to be curative remain hidden and hide the objective reason posited by Girard as to how and why violence is curative, the specific manner in which the enemies of the sacralised and sacred communities are constructed is not. The veiled nature of the sacrificial victim and mimetic desire does not obstruct Girard seeing these artefacts at work within religion and its violence; nor does it prevent reading them into the actions and publications of religious and right-wing extremists. If right-wing extremism was not moralistic and monistic in order to

protect the sacralised community, if it did not justify the use of violence to banish violence, then the applicability of Girard's thesis would be questionable. If the enemies of the sacralised community were not so completely antipodean in their construction and so completely irredeemable, making the case for the presence of the sacrificial victim and mimetic desire within the ideology of the extreme right would prove more difficult.

Within the ideology of the extreme right, the enemies of the sacralised collectivity allow for the displacement of violence, just as the justification of right-wing extremist violence demonstrates the presence of mimesis. Although not presented or discussed in herewithin, there is a case to be made for the violence of the extreme right to be posited in the same manner that Girard does religious violence – as a direct result of a communal crisis. The four levels of analysis used to understand the genesis of right-wing extremism explain violence in a manner that provides ample evidence to support the position that the pluralist liberal democracies of Europe and North America are in either a sacrificial or mimetic crisis, or even both. Although political symbols are not the same as religious symbols, it is possible to explain the neo-traditionalism touted by right-wing extremists as an attempt to reconstitute the symbols that supposedly held violence in check in the 'glorious' past. Greater economic, social and political integration could also be used to explain a mimetic crisis within the societies of North America and Europe and the presence of right-wing extremist manifestations. Both a mimetic and sacrificial crisis would also explain the political dissatisfaction and the psychological aspects discussed by other authors. Even if one insists on separating the sacrifice and mimetic desire within the context of right-wing extremism, it remains that Girard's theory adds to an understanding of right-wing extremist violence that is not dissonant with the presentation of right-wing extremist violence given by other authors. Accepting that right-wing extremism

exists in the political sphere does not preclude an understanding of it as a political phenomenon that seeks to inform every aspect of human existence, nor does it preclude an understanding of how its violence exists and operates in spheres that are not exclusively political.

Any attempt to understand the violence of the extreme right must accept its intentionality as legitimate. Scholars and even extremists themselves have, and do disagree with what exactly right-wing extremism and its violence hopes to attain, but it remains that if one refuses to take the ideology and its adherence seriously, one misses the opportunity to examine in-depth the rhetoric and actions that give some such hope and others cause to fear. Because right-wing extremists see their task of preserving and maintaining the sacralised collectivity as sacred and as necessary for their very existence, the rhetorical and actual violence they make use of is hardly irrational, anarchic or simply hateful. To discount the violence inherent to the ideology of the extreme right is to discount the powerful ontological draw and pull of the ideology. As result, to discount the violence of the extreme right is also to discount the real danger posed by its organised intolerance to lives and liberties of those who cannot or will not be part of the sacralised collectivity. The importance of presenting an understanding of right-wing extremist violence lies in the continued relevance of right-wing extremism in Europe and North America. Legislative and social responses to the caustic social presence of the extreme right can only be more, rather than less effective if their construction is based on an understanding of the clear and present danger posed by the ideology to the democratic liberal and pluralistic elements of society. In framing social and political issues in a dramatic fashion and as a series of zero-sum games, right-wing extremism grooms adherents to win at all costs or die trying. That the violence of the extreme right be sanctioned as illegal or illegitimate matters little to extremists who make use of it and see their lives and futures as forfeit without it.

As the societies in Europe and North American continue their inevitable march away from 'traditional' constitution and content, it is easy to understand how extremists continue to see their struggle as primordial. The sacralised collectivity, as they conceive of it, is in fact dying. The purpose of the violence of the extreme right, then, is greater than to fulfil one or a few social, political or personal goals. It extends far beyond the simple implementation of some revamped version of campy traditions. At once, the transformative and defensive agenda of right-wing extremists represents an almost naïve understanding of history, politics and society, while the loyalty and devotion that the sacralised collectivity continues to command from generations of adherents demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of what people need to live a full and complete life. The rhetorical and actual violence of the extreme right allow extremists the ultimate expressions of agency, allowing them to actively forge their own personal and collective destinies. In this sense, the violence of the extreme right becomes the ultimate expression of hope and the indomitability of human will.

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