

**MAPPING TRANS-NATIONAL ALT-RIGHT
DISCOURSE VIA THE GENRE OF MASS KILLER**

MANIFESTOS: /

By

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of original research; it contains no materials accepted for any other degree in any other institution and no materials previously written and/or published by any other person, except where appropriate acknowledgement is made in the form of bibliographical reference. I further declare that the following word counts for this thesis are accurate;

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ABSTRACT

The central research question of this thesis is: What, if any, are the key claims made by alt-right texts, as can be traced from the manifestos of seven mass murderers? Using Critical Discourse Analysis, this project looks to manifesto texts produced by mass killers between the years 2011 and 2019 (beginning with Anders Breivik and ending with Brenton Tarrant). It breaks the alt-right down into two central constituent groups: ‘White Replacement’ discourse, articulating fear of white extinction, and ‘Red Pill’ discourse, articulating belief in an experience of subordinated/oppressive non-hegemonic masculinity. Through tracing these two main subject from the manifesto genre through to web forums, social media, historical documents, news broadcasts, and political speeches, the author weaves a proposed network of alt-right discourse. This leads to an understanding of ideology that closely links belief and knowledge with affect and emotion.

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List of Killers and their Manifestos (Listed Chronologically)

- Anders Breivik, who killed 77 people in Norway by a combination of homemade car bomb and mass shooting at a youth camp in July of 2011. Breivik's manifesto is titled *2083: A European Declaration of Independence* (a reference to the projected year of complete European replacement).
- Frazier Glenn Miller, who killed three people and wounded several others when he began a mass shooting at a Jewish Community Center in Overland Park, Kansas in April of 2014. Miller's self-published manifesto is titled *A White Man Speaks Out*.
- Elliot Rodger, who in May of 2014, Elliot Rodger undertook his "Day of Retribution" — a killing spree that would take the lives of nine people, wound fourteen others, and end with Rodger killing himself. Rodgers' 137-page manifesto is titled *My Twisted World*¹, and he emailed it out to members of his family and friends, as well as posted a video manifesto in which he addressed an imagined audience on YouTube.
- Dylann Roof, who killed nine people during a bible study session at a black church in Charleston, North Carolina in June of 2015. Roof's manifesto is untitled, but was released on his self-run website 'the last Rhodesian'.
- Chris Harper-Mercer, a community college student who killed nine people (eight students and one faculty member) at Umpqua Community College in Oregon, USA in 2015. (Age 26 at time of shooting)
- William Edward Atchinson, who a mass shooting at Aztec High School in New Mexico, USA in December of 2017, resulting the deaths of two students and his own suicide. (Age 21 at time of shooting)
- Brenton Tarrant, who killed fifty-one people and injured forty-two more during two mass shootings at a mosque and an Islamic cultural center in Christchurch, New Zealand in March of 2019. Tarrant's manifesto is titled "The Great Replacement."

¹ Rodger, Elliot, and contributed by Lauren Johnston. "ELLIOT RODGER MANIFESTO: MY TWISTED WORLD." New York Daily News, New York Daily News, 2014. 137

Introduction

Introduction

I chose to create an analytic work tracing the emergence of alt-right discourses precisely because the ‘alt-right’ is such a vague and unstable term. The term emerged in the U.S. in 2014, when it was introduced by white supremacist Richard Spencer, and since then has included a wide variety of white supremacist, racist, misogynist, and isolationist views. According to Spencer himself, the alt-right draws on Paleoconservative ideology, the U.S.-centered conservative political philosophy that seeks to incorporate narrowly-defined ‘Christian ethics’ with limited government regionalism. Despite Spencer’s claim, however, there is little concrete evidence to support the direct tracing of this genealogy. George Hawley writes: “The Alt-Right’s precise genealogy is tricky to nail down. The basic premises of its worldview were clearly shared by earlier white-nationalist movements, but, aside from highbrow white-nationalist groups such as American Renaissance, there are few direct connections between these earlier organizations and the Alt-Right.”² The alt-right should be considered distinct from main-stream U.S. conservatism; alt-right ideologues, in fact, claim to reject the more mainstream right-wing because it focuses on peripheral political matters rather than the threat to white identity: “According to the Alt-Right, conservatives obsess over tax cuts, deregulation, and other small bourgeois concerns, but they fear tackling demographic questions, which the Alt-Right consider existential.” Conservatives who support racial equity or tolerance are said to be engaging in “a quiet campaign of genocide by encouraging nonwhite immigration, interracial relationships, low white birth rates, racial guilt, and the denigration of white culture”.³

² Hawley, George. *The Alt-Right: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press, 2019. P. 66

³ Hawley *ibid*.

What makes the alt-right even more difficult to trace is the fact that so many of its constituent members deny actually belonging to the group. Many individuals use rhetorical silences, implicit assumptions, and subtler intertextual references to trigger alt-right discourse — while simultaneously denying that they do so. Such is the case, as we shall explore, with members of the contemporary international Identarian movement, those who speak within the Men's Rights discourse (like Jordan Peterson), and with those who run alt-right/white supremacist publications. Some of these individuals would openly identify with belonging to the alt-right, but many would also deny and distance themselves from the label. The alt-right, as it exists in the 'common sense' (to borrow the concept from Gramsci), is an ill-defined and unstable term, part of a larger trans-national cluster of violent white supremacist/populist movements that are mobilizing all over the world. This movement is, I argue, a 'hyperobject'⁴ — an entity of such vast temporal and spatial dimensions that we as a collective society have no means to fully grasp or address its existence or coming into being.

This does not mean, however, that we cannot begin to trace the structuration and genealogy of alt-right discourse. Generally speaking, we know that alt-right discourse entails the circulation of preexisting ideologies of white supremacy, misogyny, and isolationism in a format suitable for proliferation online.⁵ We know that this is an international movement (although 'alt-right' typically refers to a U.S. context) and one which generally centers around a sense of shared White/European diaspora (sometimes Anglo-Saxon, sometime more broadly 'White'). This white supremacy is able to operate around rhetorical silence: James Chase Sanchez, a rhetorician working out of the Writing and Linguistics program at Middlebury

⁴ Morton, Timothy. *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*. University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

⁵ Hawley *ibid*.

college, outlines what the author calls “rhetorical versatility”⁶ within white supremacist language (the text is specifically language-centric, and does not expand into other semiotic modes). Sanchez focuses on how white supremacist language is constructed in a ‘polysomic’ way, meaning that the language can have multiple meanings, and thus be used to signal white supremacist ideology without overtly identifying the speaker as a white supremacist. Sanchez describes this work to “camouflage and signal their ideological viewpoints” as the deliberate strategy of white supremacists.⁷ In fact, many rhetoricians and critical discourse analysts have determined that rhetorical silence and ‘dogwhistling’ (employing assumptions and coded intertextualities to trigger claims of white supremacy, anti-blackness, Islamaphobia, and antisemitism⁸) are actually in and of themselves defining features of the alt-right.

These rhetorical silences are of particular important when we consider how the political and state genres (such as speeches and policy written by current political leaders) also engage in alt-right discourse. Many academics have pointed out how this is true of Trump and the U.S. context.⁹ I had originally planned to conduct my research on the alt-right in just the U.S. context. It quickly became clear to me, however, that national delineations (what Brown would call a ‘Westphalian view’, in reference to the treaty of Westphalia), break down when studying the current strain of white supremacist populism to which the alt-right belongs. If I had more time and space (if this were a PhD dissertation, for example), I would gladly connect to other state administrations (such as Brazil, Poland, or Hungary) that also play on alt-right discourse.

⁶ Sanchez, James Chase. “Trump, the KKK, and the Versatility of White Supremacy Rhetoric.” *Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric, White Supremacy in the Age of Trump: An Introduction to a Special Issue of the Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric*, Vol. 8, no. 1/2 (2018): 44–56.

⁷ Sanchez *ibid.*

⁸ Moshin, Jamie. “Hello Darkness: Antisemitism and Rhetorical Silence in the ‘Trump Era’.” *Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric, White Supremacy in the Age of Trump: An Introduction to a Special Issue of the Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric*, Vol. 8, no. 1/2 (2018)

⁹ Perry, Samuel. “President Trump and Charlottesville: Uncivil Mourning and White Supremacy.” *Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric, White Supremacy in the Age of Trump: An Introduction to a Special Issue of the Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric*, Vol. 8, no. 1/2 (2018)

This thesis is my attempt to identify and map some of the components of alt-right discourse, so that it might be more easily identified. Though the alt-right is a complex and ever-shifting network, there are those who have done a very good job of doing this already.¹⁰ My addition to the literature will be in looking to what the Southern Poverty Law Center calls ‘alt-right killers’ — mass murderers who are radicalized online and who kill because they believe that their identity as men and/or as white people is under threat. I will be examining the self-published manifestos of seven of these alt-right killers — five of whom are from the U.S., one from Norway, and one from Australia.

I tried to conduct my research with a reflexive analytic approach; I sought to draw out the most prominent themes within the texts, and only then write about them/make my analysis. Though there are a wide variety of shared intertextual and assumptive references, I centered in on two claims:

1. The claim that the white race is an inherently superior race and that it is under threat of extinction.
2. The claim that there is a category of men who live oppressed, painful lives because they have been denied what is owed to them.

The first of these claims, which I call ‘White Replacement’ discourse, I will explore in chapters 1 and 2 — where I will then tie it in with populist rhetoric. The second claim, which I call ‘Red Pill’ discourse (a common online shorthand for conspiracy theory that there is a feminist conspiracy against men to erode their rights), I will unpack in chapters 3 and 4. I will conclude that the alt-right is not made up of neatly linear genealogies or structures of epistemology or ontology, but rather a constellation of dialogic and undialogic claims. Establishing the claims that have, and continue to, encourage people to engage in mass killings and how they may be triggered/implied will, I hope, facilitate a deeper understanding of both

¹⁰ Lewis, Rebecca. “Alternative Influence: Broadcasting the Reactionary Right on YouTube” Data & Society: Initiative on Media Manipulation. September 2018.

the ideology that permeates alt-right discourse as well as recognize the mode via which it shifts between genres.

Methods

My methods for this project will be Critical Discourse Analysis. Central to this approach is the concept of ideology, which I define using Fairclough: “Ideologies are representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation.”¹¹ My analysis takes up Fairclough’s view that an ideology is a “modality of power,” in contrast “with various ‘descriptive’ views of ideology as positions, attitudes, beliefs, perspectives, etc. of social groups without reference to relations of power and domination between such groups.”¹² Ideologies, then, are a means to perform/enact power — not simply a means of describing where power already lies.

Understanding ideology as a modality of power will become particularly relevant when it comes to parsing hegemony and discourse. Hegemonic constructions of both race and gender are central to understanding alt-right discourse, and in order to analyze that I also take up Fairclough’s task of CDA for seeking to understand “how particulars come to be represented as universals — how particular identities, interests, representations come under certain conditions to be claimed as universal.”¹³ This will be central to both contextualizing and establishing the genealogy of alt-right ideologies, providing me with a means to connect them

¹¹ Fairclough 10

¹² Fairclough 8

¹³ Fairclough 41

with existing patterns of the establishment, maintenance, and contestation of social dominance for particular groups.”¹⁴

Critical Discourse Analysis, of course, is a wide field containing many methods of conducting analysis. I will be looking primarily to Fairclough, Wodak, Chilton, and van Dijk to unpack the texts. I will be using Wodak’s ‘Discourse Historical Analysis’ and her interpretation of rhetorical topology as it applies to populist discourse. In keeping with Fairclough’s view of texts as relational — across various ‘external’ texts and between the different internal ‘levels’ of the text (e.g. social practices, social events, semantics, grammar and vocabulary, discourses (genres, styles) etc.),¹⁵ Wodack, in a similar manner, is seeking to understand the ‘origin’ and transference of both the core premises and the language used to convey them. Wodak’s Discourse Historical Analysis in fact “defines discourse as a set of ‘context-dependent semiotic practices’ as well as ‘socially constituted and socially constitutive””¹⁶ This understanding of ‘context dependency’ is not so different from Fairclough’s concepts of *assumption and intertextuality*. He defines the former as “types of implicitness which are generally distinguished in the literature of linguistic pragmatics as presuppositions, logical implications or entailments, and implicatures”¹⁷ and *intertextuality* as the presence of “actual elements of other texts within a texts”.¹⁸ What differentiates Wodak’s *topos*, however, is its focus on argumentation; it encompasses not just the author’s claim, but the structure of the argumentation itself.

Topos is a term borrowed from the mathematical field of topology — a field concerned with studying the properties of space that are preserved under continuous deformations;

¹⁴ Fairclough 41

¹⁵ Fairclough 26

¹⁶ Wodak 2015

¹⁷ Fairclough 40

¹⁸ Fairclough 40

analyzing an object's topology means understanding the many ways that it can be shaped and reshaped while still preserving its essential defining features (in a Euclidean sense). An example of this is that a 'donut' and a 'coffee cup' are considered topologically identical, in that they are both objects with one hole. If you were to melt the coffee cup in a kiln and twist it around, it would still have one hole, retaining its topology. If you dashed the coffee cup on the ground, however, smashing it into two different pieces, it would no longer retain its topology (and no longer share a topology with the donut).

Wodak brings this same idea to discourse analysis; she turns to Kienpointner to define topoi as the "search formulas which tell you how and where to look for arguments," elaborating that "topoi are warrants which guarantee the transition from argument to conclusion."¹⁹ Whereas intertextuality and assumption might be considered relational elements between texts in a static, 'object' sense, topos contains not just the core premise but the associated argumentation that is make it 'move. It is important to highlight that these 'search formulas' are part of the" obligatory — either explicitly or implicitly" — meaning that - in order to reach a given conclusion - one must follow the path of certain argumentative structures.²⁰

In order to conduct my analysis, I will some of the claims of alt-right discourse across many genres. Fairclough differentiates between "Genres (ways of acting) Discourses (ways of representing) Styles (ways of being)."²¹ A genre is particular mode via which any give discourse can be done — examples being a university lecture or a bus advertisement. In this thesis, I set the parameters of 'manifesto' as a genre from which to trace ideologies (ways of doing power) contained within alt-right discourse. Other genres I will engage with are: blogs,

¹⁹ Wodak 2011 as cited in Wodak 2015

²⁰ Wodak 2015

²¹ Fairclough 27

anonymous web forums, YouTube videos, news broadcasts, political speeches, and historical documents (legislation).

Chapter 1 – White Replacement Pt. 1

1.1 Introduction

One of the most important themes in alt-right discourse is the theme of ethnic replacement — specifically of White European replacement. In this chapter, I will examine the themes of ‘ethnic replacement’ and ‘white genocide’ across select genres of alt-right discourse using Fairclough’s proposed definitions of ideology as well as assumption and intertextuality, Wodak’s interpretation of rhetorical topos, and methods of denial of racism in racist discourses as outlined by van Dyke. In the following chapter, I aim to trace the genealogy of white extinction discourse across genres of temporality, beginning with the introduction of two particular white extinction theories in the early twentieth century through to the current day, and across genres ranging from those of mass murderers motivated by the fear of white extinction. Tracing this genealogy will touch on the following elements:

- Assumption of racial difference based on ‘innate’ (often biologically/genetically-based) identity
- The emphasis on taxonomizing/documenting racial difference
- Construction of racial difference as a means of reinforcing the discursive boundaries of the nation
- The imagined common origin of the nation and the fear of ethnic replacement
- The fear of racial/ethnic extinction and the narrative of the savior.

First, I will provide a brief introduction to the history of The Great Replacement Theory and the White Genocide Theory. These two distinct theories are distinct, in that they draw on separate historical and geographic origins — and yet they share some common influences and have many points of mutual influence and co-articulation. I will trace the following themes within white extinction discourse, highlighting which intertextualities, associations, and warrants are triggered, untriggered, or denied from genre to genre — including white

supremacist blogs/websites, several pieces of “Identarian” social media (YouTube), and white supremacist manifestoes . In this chapter I hope to establish links between discourses of white replacement in these manifestos, written by four of the most impactful ‘alt-right killers’ (as defined by the Southern Poverty Law Center)²², and the alt-right social media. The four killers are:

- Anders Breivik, who killed 77 people in Norway by a combination of homemade car bomb and mass shooting at a youth camp in July of 2011. Breivik’s manifesto is titled *2083: A European Declaration of Independence* (a reference to the projected year of complete European replacement).
- Frazier Glenn Miller, who killed three people and wounded several others when he began a mass shooting at a Jewish Community Center in Overland Park, Kansas in April of 2014. Miller’s self-published manifesto is titled *A White Man Speaks Out*.
- Dylann Roof, who killed nine people during a bible study session at a black church in Charleston, North Carolina in June of 2015. Roof’s manifesto is untitled, but was released on his self-run website ‘The Last Rhodesian’ (a reference to the unrecognized South African colonial state of Rhodesia).
- Brenton Tarrant, who killed fifty-one people and injured forty-two more during two mass shootings at a mosque and an Islamic cultural center in Christchurch, New Zealand in March of 2019. Tarrant’s manifesto is titled *The Great Replacement*.

Beginning with the texts produced by these four killers, I will identify and trace several key elements from their manifestos to other genres. I have chosen the ‘manifesto’ as the genre from which to begin tracing the patterns of meaning held within alt-right discourse for two reasons: One, being that manifestos are texts written for public readership intended to be interpreted as clearly as possibly. Indeed, simply consider the English noun ‘Manifest’, meaning ‘readily perceived by the senses’ or ‘easily recognized’. Manifestos, as a genre of discourse, are intended to promote and argue the ideologies of their authors with a relatively low level of rhetorical ambiguity. Manifestos, as it were, can function as the stark white canvas on which to view the bright blue paint of alt-right discourse. My second reason for choosing the manifesto genre has to do with implications of violence and hostility that accompany the manifesto. Both ‘manifest’ and ‘manifesto’ ultimately derive

²² Keegan, Hanks, and Amend Alex. “The Alt-Right Is Killing People.” Southern Poverty Law Center, 5 Feb. 2018, www.splcenter.org/20180205/alt-right-killing-people.

from the Latin noun ‘manus’, meaning ‘hand’, and ‘infestus’, meaning hostile. This carries etymology carries two meanings for our purposes: the ‘hostility’ of the alt-right killers, who by definition all committed mass-murders, and the ‘hostility’ of infection when it comes to the ideology that they propagate. One of the most common rhetorical denials employed within the alt-right community is that the ideology that its constituent members espouse is neither harmful nor does it lead to the radicalization of others. The manifesto genre is, by definition, articulated by individuals who have not only killed others, but have done so and published these texts in an effort to increase others to do so (to interpolate the reader, in a sense). Indeed, for shooters like Breivik and Rodger, the most influential figures are, well, *shooters like Breivik and Rodger*. These manifestos are some of the most important texts of radicalization at the moment; around the world people are downloading *2083* and *My Twisted World* from Reddit and Twitter and Gab links at the click of a button (if they are watching one of the many reproductions of the texts on YouTube). In a discourse characterized by vagueness and denial as much as that of the alt-right, it is important to begin with the most overt, blindingly horrifying texts so that we can trace their emergence from, contribution to, and articulation with/out of other more ambiguous genres.

With that being stated, I am going to commence establishing the epistemology and structuration of white replacement discourse within the manifestos of Breivik, Roof, Miller, and Tarrant. My aim is to establish a simple mapping of how white replacement discourse functions and around what central premises, claims, and warrants it hinges. I will then trace it into alt-right social media — via white supremacist blogs as well as an ‘Identarian’ YouTube channel. I hesitate to dub these other genres more ‘mainstream’ or ‘less extreme’ than those of the killers, because I question the stability of an arboreal chain between genres. Rather, I seek to map the following themes across the multi-planar spaces of white replacement

discourse (being discourse that hinges around an existential belief in a real and prevalent threat to White identity). In this way, I hope to establish the epistemology and discursive structuration of white replacement discourse, before continuing on to connect it to contemporary populist movements in Chapter 2.

1.2 A Brief History of the ‘Great Replacement’ and ‘White Genocide’ Theories

In order to trace the discursive genealogy of white replacement, we must actually look to the history of two separate (though often overlapping) theories: *The Great Replacement* theory and the *White Genocide* theory. One of the primary differences between *The Great Replacement* and the *White Genocide* theories are where they originated and were cultivated; the former finds its origins in French Colonial history and early French Nationalism, whereas the latter can be traced to Jim Crow Era legislation in the U.S. *The Great Replacement*, is the English translation of the original “Le Grand Remplacement” theory, and first entered the public discourse in the year 1900, days of early twentieth century French Nationalism. The theory has two main components:

1. That generally ‘Western’ identity is under siege by massive waves of immigration from non-European sources (specifically the ‘Arab-Muslim World’ [Camus’ term]), resulting in a replacement of European individuals via demographics.²³
2. That this replacement has been orchestrated by a shadowy group as part of their grand plan to rule the world — which they will do by creating a completely racially homogenous society. This group is often overtly called the Jews, but sometimes the antisemitism is more implicit.²⁴

I argue that *The Great Replacement* is both a discourse and a particular iteration of the ideology of white supremacy. In truth, ideologies of racial difference and hierarchy predate the term “le grand remplacement” by many centuries in France; as a colonial power and

²³ Camus, Renaud. *Le Grand Remplacement suivi de Discours d’Orange*. P.O.L. Editeur. 2002.

²⁴ Camus *ibid*.

profiteer of the slave economy, the construction of racial difference in France has always been predicated on anti-blackness and white supremacy.²⁵ Legacies of fear surrounding slave uprisings and retributive violence directed towards white masters pervade the colonial legacy of France — an historical example being the rebellion of self-liberated slaves in Haiti in August 1791, leading to the Haitian revolution and subsequent national independence from French colonial rule. It was in 1900, however, that “le grand remplacement” is introduced as a term via the book *L’Appel au soldat*, by the French Nationalist Maurice Barrès.²⁶ Barrès uses the term “grand remplacement” by “l’étranger” — a “great replacement” by “the foreigner.”²⁷ Barrès also wrote that: though “France can always be called France, its soul will be dead, emptied, destroyed.”²⁸

The term was then used by the white supremacist Jean Raspail in his novel *Les Campes des Saintes* — a vastly influential book on modern white supremacist discourse. In the book, Raspail paints an apocalyptic picture of the complete collapse of all Western society and culture stemming from a “tidal wave” of immigration from the “Third World”.²⁹ It was in 2010, however, that The Great Replacement Theory truly took flight in the white supremacist culture; Renaud Camus introduced the term in his book *De l’Innocence*, warning of the replacement of white Europeans by peoples coming from the Middle East and North

²⁵ Aubert, Guillaume. “‘The Blood of France’: Race and Purity of Blood in the French Atlantic World.” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 61, no. 3, 2004, pp. 439–478. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/3491805.

²⁶ Laurent, Samuel, et al. “La Théorie Du « Grand Remplacement », De L’écrivain Renaud Camus Aux Attentats En Nouvelle-Zélande.” *Le Monde.fr*, *Le Monde*, 15 Mar. 2019, www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2019/03/15/la-theorie-du-grand-remplacement-de-l-ecrivain-renaud-camus-aux-attentats-en-nouvelle-zelande_5436843_4355770.html.

²⁷ Samuel et al. *ibid*

²⁸ Barrès Maurice. *L’Appel Au Soldat*. Plon-Nourrit, 1926.

²⁹ Dupuis, Jérôme. “Le Camp Des Saints, De Jean Raspail, Un Succès De Librairie Raciste?” *L’Express.fr*, 8 Apr. 2011, www.lexpress.fr/culture/livre/le-camp-des-saints-de-jean-raspail-un-succes-de-librairie-raciste_980039.html.

Africa.³⁰ This is the text that influences much of the white supremacist discourse that we see today, and is directly referenced by the Identarian movement.³¹ The Great Replacement came

The White Genocide theory, however, can be traced back to the Jim Crow era United States and the rise of the influence of eugenics policies on legislation. One of the earliest proponents of the theory was a man named Madison Grant, who published a book titled *The Passing of the Great Race* in 1916. The term next appears in *White Power*, the official newspaper of the National Socialist White People's Party, how the American Nazi Party renamed itself in 1966. The term appears in an article claiming that the "Over-Population Myth Is Cover for White Genocide," accusing the feminist movement and "birth control campaign" of curbing the reproduction rates of white people while not doing so in countries with primarily non-white populations, eventually leading to a future in which "whites will be outnumbered four to one."³² Since that time, the White Genocide theory has been prevalent in white supremacist discourses in the U.S.; one of its most influential proponents is white supremacist leader David Lane, whose text "The White Genocide Manifesto" circulates widely in white supremacist communities³³. Though Lane is currently incarcerated for having murdered a Jewish radio host in 1984, a copy of his manifesto is hosted on Stormfront — one of the post popular 'alt-right' forums and frequent posting ground of Brenton Tarrant.

As we can see, though the Great Replacement and the White Genocide theories share many commonalities, there are key differences in both their content and epistemological construction. Whereas the Great Replacement plays more on fear of invasion from outsiders,

³⁰ Wildman, Sarah. "‘You Will Not Replace Us’: a French Philosopher Explains the Charlottesville Chant." Vox, Vox, 15 Aug. 2017, www.vox.com/world/2017/8/15/16141456/renaud-camus-the-great-replacement-you-will-not-replace-us-charlottesville-white.

³¹ "The Great Replacement." *Generation Identity*, Generation Identity, www.generation-identity.co/great-exchange/.

³² Feshami, Kevan A. "Fear of White Genocide." *Lapham's Quarterly*, 6 Sept. 2017, www.laphamsquarterly.org/roundtable/fear-white-genocide.

³³ Lane, David. "White Genocide Manifesto." *David Lane 1488*, www.davidlane1488.com/whitegenocide.html.

the White Genocide theory hinges fear of internal outsiders, playing on the U.S.' history of racial oppression and classification. Whereas the Great Replacement focuses its gaze on the other from outside the state, it is significant to consider that the black community within the U.S. holds a hegemonically subordinated status while at the same time being considered state subjects (though of course not always citizens/full citizens). The biopolitical relation, to put it in Foucauldian terms, has a different structure. Whereas the Great Replacement theory posits that others must be kept outside the Westphalian boundaries of the nation, the White Genocide theory seeks to discipline and control black bodies — making racial mixing a particular fear within the discourse. This difference will become significant in section 1.5, when I explore the discursive role of 'numerousness' of population in white replacement discourse, and how it varies slightly between killers. It will also be significant in chapter 2, when connecting to how U.S. populists play on white replacement fears.

1.3 Claims of Racial Difference and Rhetorical Denial

The construction of racial difference within discourses of white extinction theory is one which is predicated on three central rhetorical claims. Sometimes these claims are overtly stated as intertextualities — particularly in the manifesto genre, where the racial structuration is arguably most overt — while at other times they are articulated in the form of assumptions. If these assumptions are not overtly triggered in the text, they are implicit based on the underlying ideology and historical context out of which theories of race and racial purity articulate. When introducing the concept of 'genre', Fairclough draws a distinction between 'internal' and 'external' relations of texts.³⁴ For the purposes of this analysis, I will dive into these 'external' relations, which means relations to other texts varying from overtly reported

³⁴ Fairclough.40

speech (“He asked me “Will you buy the milk?”) to far more subtle implicit meanings.

Fairclough divides these types of intertextual references into ‘intertextualities’, which overtly refer to other texts and ‘assumptions’, which do the same but only via implication.³⁵ Though sometimes they come in the form of intertextuality, and sometimes in the form of assumption, I argue that racial difference within alt-right discourse contains the following three claims:

Central to white replacement discourse is an ideology of innate racial difference as linked to both the strength and quality of the nation. This can be further broken down into three assumptions:

1. The existential claim that there is such a thing as both ‘race’ and ‘racial purity’, linked with the intertextual claim or implicit value assumption that white racial category is better than black.
2. The propositional claim that a ‘mixing’ of the races (through sexual/biological reproduction) will result in a ‘dilution’ of this purity.
3. The value claim that a strong and capable nation-state is predicated upon racial heterogeneity, which via its logical topology [Wodak] creates a subsequent warrant that racial purity must be maintained for the sake of preserving both the nation and the state (which are often, though not always, seen as synonymous).

Sometime in the spring of 2012, roughly three years before he would walk into a North Carolina church and murdered nine black people during a bible study session, Dylann Roof typed the phrase ‘black on white crime’ into Google.³⁶ According to Roof, he was confused by all the media chaos following the shooting of unarmed black teenager Trayvon Martin by Martin Zimmerman, confounded as to why the killing was be labeled as a hate crime in the national press. Roof entered the search term and clicked on a link for the Council of Conservative Citizens, a Southern Poverty Law Center-designated white supremacist hate group³⁷ which often presents itself as a mainstream conservative organization.,³⁸ where Roof

³⁵ Fairclough 2003 41

³⁶ Roof via Mother Jones. “Here’s What Appears to Be Dylann Roof’s Horrifically Racist Manifesto.” *Mother Jones*, 24 June 2017, www.motherjones.com/politics/2015/06/alleged-charleston-shooter-dylann-roof-manifesto-racist/.

³⁷ “Council of Conservative Citizens.” Southern Poverty Law Center, www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/council-conservative-citizens.

³⁸ Graham, David A. “The White-Supremacist Group That Inspired a Racist Manifesto.” *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 22 June 2015, www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/06/council-of-conservative-citizens-dylann-roof/39646/.

encountered “pages upon pages of these brutal black on white murders.” “I was in disbelief,” Roof writes in his self-published manifesto. “At this moment I realized that something was very wrong. How could the news be blowing up the Trayvon Martin case while hundreds of these black on white murders got ignored?”

Roof’s text centers around the question of racial difference. Reflecting his perspective as a 21-year-old young man living in South Carolina, Roof presents ‘evidence’ of black people bullying white people in school, saying that the behavior and inherent nature of black and white people are different:

Anyone who thinks that White and black people look as different as we do on the outside, but are somehow magically the same on the inside, is delusional. How could our faces, skin, hair, and body structure all be different, but our brains be exactly the same? This is the nonsense we are led to believe. ³⁹

Roof here is expressing a fundamental belief in a reality of racial difference; that because what he views as racially other features can be seen (via outward features such as ‘faces, skin, hair, and body structure’) then by logical extrapolation, racial difference must be both apparent and significant when it comes to ‘brains’.

Frazier Glenn Miller articulates a similar belief in inherent racial difference, particularly in relation to intelligence/cognitive capacity. He writes:

Studies prove that the average IQ for the African Negro Race is 75, the American Negro Race is 84; and the White Race is 100. Of course the reason for the nine point difference between African Negroes and American Negroes is, without any doubt, due to American Negroes having some Aryan blood in their veins. ⁴⁰

I argue that Roof and Miller are both engaging in what Wodak would term a ‘Topos of reality’⁴¹ which results in the warrant that: “Because reality is as it is, a specific action/decision should be made”. (Wodak 33) In their minds, the ‘reality’ that they can see

³⁹Roof via Mother Jones

⁴⁰Glenn Miller, Frazier. *Archive.org*. archive.org/details/awmso.

⁴¹ Wodak 33

markers of racial difference (markers which, I will note, are the product of hundreds of years of social construction and bias towards certain features based on existing social hierarchies add reference (Zsazsa, does this make sense?)) then the logical conclusion is that there is an innate (beyond social construction/articulation of structures of hegemony) difference between different people of different races.

Roof is far from alone in his belief in the absolute nature of racial difference. The U.S., like many countries, has a history of racial oppression and anti-blackness that stretches back to its founding and the days of colonization and a genocide of the First Nations peoples. Racial difference is particularly firmly set in the structuration of U.S. mentality and belief, given the history of slavery, postbellum reconstructionism, the Jim Crow laws of the early twentieth century, and the contemporary carceral state. Though an ideology of absolute racial difference stretches back hundreds of years, I believe that an illuminating text that we can look to to trace the genealogy of this concept is the state of Virginia's Racial Integrity Act of 1924 — a piece of legislation passed in an attempt to prevent race-based intermarriage and miscegenation. This law was passed at the height of the Jim Crow era (not long after the publication of *The Passing of the Great Race* in 1916); the new law incorporated both long-standing notions of racial purity as well as beliefs from the developing eugenics movement of the early 20th century. The fifth article of the legislation is as follows:

It shall hereafter be unlawful for any white person in this State to marry any save a white person, or a person with no other admixture of blood than white and American Indian. For the purpose of this act, the term "white person" shall apply only to the person who has no trace whatsoever of any blood other than Caucasian; but persons who have one-sixteenth or less of the blood of the American Indian and have no other non-Caucasic blood shall be deemed to be white persons. All laws heretofore passed and now in effect regarding the intermarriage of white and colored persons shall apply to marriages prohibited by this act.⁴²

⁴² "An Act to Preserve Racial Integrity." Virginia Racial Integrity Act of 1924, University of Virginia, 1924, www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/lewisandclark/students/projects/monacans/Contemporary_Monacans/racial.html.

In this article, race is defined via the ‘one-drop rule’, also known as ‘hypodescent,’⁴³ a rule for defining racial purity which stretches back to the earliest era of colonialism in the Americas.⁴⁴ The construction of race was such that a child was considered to be of mixed-race, mulatto, or otherwise non-white status if they had just one drop of non-white blood. As legal scholar Cheryl Harris wrote in 1993: “Although the courts applied varying fractional formulas in different jurisdictions to define ‘Black’ or, in the terms of the day, ‘Negro’ or ‘colored,’ the law uniformly accepted the rule of hypodescent - racial identity was governed by blood, and white was preferred.”⁴⁵

An example of this in the manifesto genre can be seen in Frazier Glenn Miller’s text. He is certain the black people will come to replace white people because: “Not only do the coloreds produce large families, the Whites there, and everywhere, are committing self-genocide through birth control and race-mixing. Colored women make colored babies and White women do too.” *emphasis added*[sic]⁴⁶ It is in this example that we can understand that the drop of blood conception of race is, in its very nature, inclined towards theories of ethnic replacement and white extinction. In a world where whiteness is a status to lose — a thing to be diluted via miscegenation — any case where a white person reproduces with a non-white person is framed as a ‘loss’, rather than a coming together or a mixing. Legal scholar Neil Gotanda, who has also written extensively on US legislation through the lens of Critical Race Theory, writes: “Under hypodescent, Black parentage is recognized through the generations....Black ancestry is a contaminant that overwhelms white ancestry. Thus, under the American system of racial classification, claiming a white racial identity is a declaration

⁴³ Harris, Cheryl I. “Whiteness as Property.” *Harvard Law Review*, vol. 106, no. 8, June 1993, p. 1707., doi:10.2307/1341787.

⁴⁴ Sweet, Frank W. *Legal History of the Color Line: the Rise and Triumph of the One-Drop Rule*. Backintyme, 2005.

⁴⁵ Harris, . 1707.

⁴⁶ Glenn Miller

of racial purity and an implicit assertion of racial domination.”⁴⁷ It is through this logic that we can understand Miller’s claim that ‘colored women make colored babies’ and that ‘White women do too’. The underlying epistemology of hypodescent-informed race is inherently asymmetrical: “[T]he moment of racial recognition is the moment in which is reproduced the inherent asymmetry of the metaphor of racial contamination and the implicit impossibility of racial equality.”⁴⁸

That is why it is so important to recognize that hypodescent forms the foundation of the US conception of race and racial difference, and indeed informs contemporary notions of race and racial purity across many genres. I will briefly note, at this point, that the drop of blood theory — along with most any definitions of race and racial purity — are the product of social construction, not empirical evidence. Recent studies in the field of molecular anthropology have found though the contemporary population *does* reflect three centuries of an “endogamous color line”, preventing cross-race reproduction and resulting in a population of majority European descent which self-identifies as ‘White,’” the genetic delineation is far from stark. In fact, ““one-third of White Americans carry measurable recent African genetic admixture in their DNA, the equivalent of having a single ancestor of one hundred percent African admixture from around the year 1880,”⁴⁹ demonstrating that though centuries of racial oppression and stigma have resulted in a somewhat materially heterogenous population, racial purity is a myth.⁵⁰ Gotanda illustrates this clearly when he writes about what he terms “historical race”.⁵¹ Historical race is not simply the construction of whiteness as race, but race coupled with privilege. That is why it is significant that making race

⁴⁷ Gotanda, Neil. *Critical Race Theory the Key Writings That Formed the Movement*. Edited by Kimberle Krenshaw et al., The New Press, 2010.

⁴⁸ Gotanda, Neil. *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Sweet (9)

⁵⁰ Note: And even this measurement may reflect racial bias/construction in its measurement -- all measurement is performative

⁵¹ Gotanda *ibid.*

‘determinant’ and a product of rationality and science. It is through this that “dominant and subordinate positions within the racial hierarchy were disguised as the product of natural law and biology rather than as naked preferences. Whiteness as racialized privilege was then legitimated by science and was embraced in legal doctrine as "objective fact."⁵²

This is why it is important to highlight the fact that white supremacist discourse clings to the notion that race/racial construction is an ‘objective fact’. Take, for example, the white supremacist website ‘Occidental Dissent’ — which, though its founder, Hunter Wallace, claims to disavow the White Genocide theory — frequently publishes articles about ‘Race Realism,’ a popular theory in white supremacist/nationalist spaces. ‘Race Realism’ can perhaps best be understood as the contemporary iteration of Scientific Racism — including the modals of power which it draws from the eugenics movement of the twentieth century.⁵³ Wallace actually refrains from defining ‘Race Realism’ as an ideology, concept, or belief, and instead chooses to define people who are ‘Race Realists’:

A race realist is an intelligent, educated person who has studied the issue of race and concluded that, yes, there are heritable racial differences in the human species. We live in a world which weirdly denies a century of empirical evidence.⁵⁴

The “empirical evidence” which Wallace cites (via hypertext link) is another one of his blog posts. In this one, Wallace quotes the Enlightenment philosopher Voltaire, who writes:

It is a serious question among them whether they are descended from monkeys or whether the monkeys come from them. Our wise men have said that man was created in the image of God. Now here is a lovely image of the Divine Maker – a flat and black nose with little or hardly any intelligence. A time will doubtless come when these animals will know how to cultivate the land well, beautify their houses and gardens, and know the paths of the stars: one needs time for everything.⁵⁵

⁵² Harris *ibid.*

⁵³ Wallace, Hunter. “Race Realism.” Occidental Dissent, 2019, www.occidentaldissent.com/category/race-realism/.

⁵⁴ Wallace

⁵⁵ Wallace, Hunter. “The Enlightenment's Good Points.” Occidental Dissent, 21 Mar. 2019, www.occidentaldissent.com/2019/03/20/the-enlightenment-good-points/.

The ‘heritable racial differences’ that Wallace provides as evidence clearly position black people as lesser than white people. Voltaire is questioning the claim (mocking, even) that white people and black people are evolutionarily related. He likens black people to monkeys (questioning if they are descended from primates, as all humans are commonly understood to be) or if ‘the monkeys come from them’ — implying that black people are actually *less* evolved than monkeys. This is reenforced when the quote goes on to say that “these animals” need time to develop into civilized humans — time to learn how to provide for themselves (‘cultivate the land’), ‘beautify their houses and gardens’, as well as learn about scientific inquiry (‘know the paths of the stars’). Racial difference is, therefore, closely associated with white superiority and paternalism. Wallace concludes his article by writing that modern U.S. society should return to ‘benevolent monarchy’ — implicitly, one in which white people rule black people. He writes that “Racial equality is an impossible dream, but a benevolent, patriarchal, technocratic government is not.”⁵⁶

1.4 White Supremacy and the Discursive Role of Intelligence

The existential assumption of racial hierarchy (that inherent racial difference along a white/black color line exists) is closely tied to the value assumption of white racial hegemony (that white people are inherently better than black people in terms of cognition, physical capacity, and morality). All four of the alt-right killers employ intertextual assertions⁵⁷ of white superiority, and Miller and Roof both engage in the specific claim that that white people have innately higher IQs than black people. We will recall that Miller wrote:

Studies prove that the average IQ for the African Negro Race is 75, the American Negro Race is 84; and the White Race is 100. Of course the reason for the nine point

⁵⁶ Wallace, March 2019

⁵⁷ Fairclough

difference between African Negroes and American Negroes is, without any doubt, due to American Negroes having some Aryan blood in their veins.⁵⁸

Roof's text holds strikingly similar assertions, writing that: "Negroes have lower Iqs, lower impulse control, and higher testosterone levels in generals. These three things alone are a recipe for violent behavior." [sic]⁵⁹

Miller and Roof alike connect the existential assumption of racial difference with the assumption of white racial superiority which can alternately be interpreted as a value assumption of the worth of white people over black people, or an existential assumption about the existence of the 'fact' of higher measurable intelligence — a 'fact' which is actually a belief inherited from past iterations of scientific racism.

In the text that Roof has produced, we see Roof's belief in the expression of race ties action and cognition to the somatic; 'lower Iqs' directly connect cognitive capacity to the body and its heritable traits, 'lower impulse control' connect the black body to action and decision-making, and 'higher testosterone' connects the black soma to hormones and reproduction — a justification for 'violent behavior'. This displays how assumptions of biological materiality, action, and cognition are coconstructed within discourses predicated on the assumption of inherent racial difference. The bridge⁶⁰ between this assumption and the value assumption of white hegemony/superiority is historically, politically, and semantically established.

And yet, discourses of white supremacy and white extinction frequently engage in a rhetorical denial of that value assumption. They leave the value 'untriggered',⁶¹ as it were, and often engage in forms of semantic negation to deny the implicit value assumption of racial priority. If we return to the Fairclough, we will remember that assumptions can often

⁵⁸ Glenn Miller

⁵⁹ Roof

⁶⁰ Fairclough 60

⁶¹ Fairclough 61

be implicit — particularly value assumptions.⁶² Such is the case with Hunter Wallace and what he writes on his website.

We will remember that Wallace chose to not define what ‘Race Realism’ is, instead defining *who* a ‘Race Realist’ is, engaging in the identity of ‘Race Realist’ rather than the beliefs or values of the concept. Wallace goes on to reemphasize the ‘individual’ definition, giving two examples of Race Realists:

A race realist is someone like Jared Taylor who speaks Japanese and will not be surprised by the data. He will be vindicated by the data for two reasons. He is smart and educated. He is motivated by integrity and altruism...The “racist” is someone who really is animated by hatred of other races. There is no sense of malevolence in Jared Taylor or James Watson though. I’m not a malevolent person either. This is just another truth that is as obvious to me as any other. It is a part of my mental universe like the idea that spring weather has finally arrived here in Alabama or that $2 + 2 = 4$.⁶³

Wallace, I argue, is engaging in several rhetorical denials, the first of which is the emphasis on the individual speaker, rather than the actual substance of the discourse. First of all, Wallace is attempting to invoke a legitimacy of established figures in the more mainstream white supremacist discourse. Wallace refers to Jared Taylor, a white supremacist who runs the well-established far-right publishing hub and website *American Renaissance*, as well as James Watson, the famous scientist who was part of the team to crack the human genome and was publically disgraced after being quoted in the *Sunday Times Magazine* in 2007 making racist remarks and implying that black people are genetically inferior (specifically: less intelligent than white people). By choosing to refer to Taylor and Watson, Wallace is attempting to legitimize himself both before his audience as well as make his argument seem less radical (and therefore substantiate his claim that there is a separation between the assumption of racial difference and the assumption of racial hierarchy. Taylor is

⁶² Fairclough 61

⁶³ Wallace

one of the most well-established figures in the white supremacist landscape, and one of the most visible advocates of the ‘Race Realism’ theory’, and he often will appear in more mainstream conservative discourse. Watson, on the other hand, is a renowned scientist who made one of the most important scientific contributions of the 20th century; his fall from grace after the publication of his racist comments represent to those in the white supremacist⁶⁴ and more mainstream scientific communities⁶⁵ ‘social justice run amok’ (including, it is likely, Wallace’s readership).

By emphasizing the individual (the ‘Race Realist’), rather than the ‘concept’, Wallace also uses the vehicle of identity to construct a manichean dichotomy between ‘Race Realist’ and ‘Racist’. A person can only be one of two things — a ‘Race Realist’, or a ‘Racist’, in Wallace’s construction. There is no capacity for a ‘Race Realist’ to hold racist ideas; all of their ideas, by definition, are ‘Race Realist’ ideas because *they are the ones holding them*.

This type of denial, according to van Dijk’s 1991 *Racism and the Press: Critical Studies in Racism and Migration*, is one of the most typical within the “meaning structure of racist discourse.” The speaker (in this case, Wallace) denies the implicit assumption (the value assumption of racial hierarchy) by instead redirecting to a value claim about the individuals holding that view, instead engaging in a “positive self-presentation of the speaker or writer” — i.e. to claim “‘I’m no racist’”.⁶⁶ In other words, Wallace disclaims the potential charge of racism by directing not to a logical counter-argument, but rather to a value claim about the intentions and morality of the speaker. Wallace denies the implicit assumption of racial hierarchy by introducing an argument about the intentions of Watson and Taylor — changing the key focus of the text from the subject of racism (a macro-concept) to one about

⁶⁴ Roberts, Paul Craig. “Home.” PaulCraigRoberts.org, www.paulcraigroberts.org/2019/01/14/identity-politics-white-genocide/.

⁶⁵ BG, Charlton. “First a Hero of Science and Now a Martyr to Science: the James Watson Affair - Political Correctness Crushes Free Scientific Communication.” National Center for Biotechnology Information, U.S. National Library of Medicine, 16 Apr. 2008, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed.

⁶⁶ Dijk, Van, et al. *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Blackwell, 2003. 177

the two individuals and their *particular motives*. This is a kind of play on *ad hominem*, except instead of being used to attack an individual rather than an argument, it is instead using an individual as a logical justification, rather than offering an argument.

1.5 The Role of Numerousness

White replacement discourse, is also characterized not just by the assumptions of racial difference, but by a shared characteristics of a preoccupation with quantifying race and racial difference. Breivik and Tarrant continuously point to the preponderance of outsiders — a matter of sheer number, rather than variety. Breivik writes:

Islam is growing rapidly in Western Europe; from 50 000 in 1955 to 25 million today, in 2008. Islam will continue to increase through demographic warfare (high birth rates combined with immigration) from 5% to 10, to 25 until it reaches 50%.⁶⁷

This is just one example of the emphasis on numbers in Breivik's text; he references demographics statistics in nearly every section of his 1,500 page text. Tarrant is similarly focused on number and scale, writing that:

In 2100, despite the ongoing effect of sub-replacement fertility, the population figures show that the population does not decrease inline with the sub-replacement fertility levels, but actually maintains and, even in many White nations, rapidly increases.⁶⁸

Though Tarrant's argumentation is slightly less clear, and he employs fewer arabic numerals, the sense of sheer numbers is just as present. He predicts that the white population will shrink down to nothing over the course of the 21st century, using language like 'sub-replacement fertility' and 'population figures' which are borrowed from the discourse of research science and biomedical statistics — similarly with 'decrease', 'maintain', and 'increase' 'in line' evokes the image of a cartesian graph.

⁶⁷ Breivik

⁶⁸ Tarrant

For the two U.S.-based alt-right killers, Miller and Roof, there is a similar focus on the numerousness of the racial threat — but rather in terms of multiplicity, rather than preponderance. Roof divides his manifesto into sections labeled by race: “Blacks”, “Jews”, “Hispanics”, and “East Asians”, reflecting the centrality of categorization to his fear of white genocide and justification for mass-murder. The racial taxonomies created in these texts are wide and important to their writers. Tarrant, Miller, and Breivik all liken people of non-white categories to animals, with Roof making the comparison:

“There are personality traits within human families, and within different breeds of cats or dogs, so why not within the races? A horse and a donkey can breed and make a mule, but they are still two completely different animals. Just because we can breed with the other races doesnt make us the same.”⁶⁹ [sic]

Not only does this text touch upon the key role that assumptions of race and reproduction play in white replacement discourse (which we will expand upon in section 2.6), but it highlights just how important racial division is in the underlying logic of Roof’s text. Roof is claiming that black people and white people are fundamentally different species — as different as a ‘horse and a donkey’. The mule (i.e. the child of mixed racial inheritance) is therefore a constructed, infertile creature: wrong and incapable of reproduction.

When writing about the connection between race and intelligence, Miller references the book *The Bell Curve* (noting that the book was written by Jews, which Miller excuses, arguing that *The Bell Curve* simply reveals the racial realities that the Jews already know to be true). Miller writes: “*The Bell Curve* study combines the entire Caucasian race when calculating the average IQ of 100, including Spaniards, Indians, some Cubans, and the Slavic people. If they had confined their calculation to Aryans, it would be at least 110 and probably higher.” [sic]⁷⁰ Miller articulates a belief in not just the many varieties of non-white categories, but within the category of ‘Caucasian’ as well. Miller fixates on a particular white

⁶⁹ Roof

⁷⁰ Frazier Glenn Miller

hegemonic category, which he calls ‘Aryan’ — an intertextuality inherited from Nazi rhetoric. In Miller’s view, Aryan whiteness is the top end of the racial chain, making it interesting when he admits that even his wife and children are not fully Aryan, writing: “My wife is Polish-Italian-German, and therefore is mostly non-Aryan Caucasian. Our five children therefore are Polish-Italian-German-Scottish-Irish-English. But, are full Caucasian.”⁷¹

This drive towards taxonomy and separation carries over into different genres of white supremacist social media. Brittany Pettibone is a popular ‘alt-right blogger’, with one of the most popular white supremacist channels on YouTube. Pettibone, an American, frequently appears with her fiancé Martin Sellner, and Austrian member of the European Identitarian movement Martin Sellner. In a video recorded for Pettibone’s channel, titled “What is Ethnopluralism?” she and Sellner discuss the ideology and “movement” (their term). Sellner states that he identifies as an “ethnopluralist”, saying:

If you really are an ethno-pluralist, you clearly say that every culture has its right of existence and its value in the self. And what you want is the coexistence of cultures in the world. And I grant Tibetans, and the Japanese, and the Sri Lankans the right for existence — for having an ethnocultural identity and being sovereign nations. And I want just the same right for us.”⁷²

Sellner is employing the same rhetorical technique as Wallace used — the same racial denial via emphasis on the individual noted by van Dijk. Rather than addressing the substance of the ideology or concept of ‘Ethnopluralism’, Sellner chooses to define what it means to be an ‘ethnopluralist’ — redirecting from a definition rooted in substance or logic-based understanding of the concept to one rooted in the identity of the speaker. By turning the definition to one rooted in identity, Sellner is able to do just what Wallace does: he can develop a manichean dichotomy based in identity. Whereas individuals can hold multiple

⁷¹ Frazier Glenn Miller

⁷² Pettibone, Brittany, director. What Is the Great Replacement? YouTube, YouTube, 26 Nov. 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=wItTEUBh2Ho&t=5s.

beliefs at once, according to Sellner's argumentation the world is divided into two categories of people: "Globalists vs people who want to preserve the ethnic identity." Sellner is creating a false epistemology by reducing the choices to 'ethnopluralists' or 'globalists' (a term with loaded antisemitic connotations, particularly when considering the antisemitic genealogy of the concept in Barrés and Camus' texts). If an ethnopluralist is someone who wants to 'grant Tibetans, and the Japanese, and the Sri Lankans the right for existence', then, logic dictates, a 'globalist' is someone who *does not* want to grant them the right to exist (a non-specified 'non-existence', whether that be chauvinism, expansionism, or outright violence).

In fact, like Wallace, Sellner seems determined to contrast 'ethnopluralism' with racism. Sellner highlights that he and Pettibone, speaking for the Identarian/Ethnopluralist community:

Want to preserve our ethano-identity but in a way that is not chauvinistic — that does not, that does not consider others inferior, does not want to exterminate them... "I [Sellner], for example, reject the old racist chauvinistic ideologies that are very often linked to the demand to preserve our culture and our identity."⁷³

Sellner is engaging in 'straw man' rhetoric, creating a phantom 'racist' of the past who is distinct (even cast in direct contrast to) his 'ethnopluralist'. 'Old racist chauvinistic ideologies' are rooted in the idea that others are 'inferior', and Sellner claims to deny that implicit value assumption. Sellner instead seeks legitimacy by packaging his arguments as a new, hip, white identity — a millennial version of White Extinction conspiracy theorists. He and Pettibone certainly look the part; they sit in a hip cafe, casually chatting with each other, looking like any other semi-famous YouTube couple. Though the core of this ideology is rooted in the Great Replacement theory's 20th century origins, this is a distinctly 21st century iteration. The discursive strategy is made all the more effective because Sellner employs many of the key intertextual references as progressive liberal discourse; 'preserving ethnic identity', 'coexistence of cultures', and the even the term 'pluralist' borrow vocabulary from liberal progressive genres.

⁷³ Pettibone 2018

1.6 Conclusion

With each genre we have unpacked when outlining white replacement discourse, it is important to understand to whom the authors of the chosen texts are imagined to speak. Each of the killers we have unpacked thus far all make the same claim that someone must ‘do something’. That the white race is under an imminent threat, and that there must be a call-to-arms of white men defending their race. This makes sense, given the manifesto genre and the fact that it is designed to interpolate an imagined audience. For Glenn Miller, this is his imagined brother-in-arms in the White Nation — unsurprising, given Miller’s history as the head of the Carolina chapter of the Ku Klux Klan⁷⁴ — that Miller addresses as ‘Whitey’. For Breivik, his audience is also an imagined homosocial network of white men, although he pictures them as men who interact mainly online. His manifesto excerpts other texts published elsewhere online in white supremacist web forums, and in the introductory portions of his text he includes instructions for the manifesto’s dissemination online — including how to install torrent clients and utilize social media to spread the text online. Tarrant and Roof similarly publish their manifestos online, and speak to an imagined audience of young, white men that they hope to push towards radicalization. The genre of social media is less overt in its call to violence; in fact, Sellner chooses his rhetoric specifically to make it seem as though he is distancing himself from violent action, instead using the language of a youth-oriented political movement. It is important to remember, however, that just because other genres of white replacement discourse do not invoke the same overt call to violence as the manifesto genre, the core claims and hegemonic representation of “particulars as universals”⁷⁵, as Fairclough might

⁷⁴ “Frazier Glenn Miller.” Southern Poverty Law Center, www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/frazier-glenn-miller.

⁷⁵ Fairclough 41

put it, carry over between different registers of text. This will come of particular significance in Chapter 2, when I attempt to parse how white replacement discourse is utilized by contemporary populists.

Chapter 2 – White Replacement pt. 2

2.1 Introduction

Having unpacked a few of what I believe to be the key claims that constitute white replacement discourse, in this the next chapter I will broaden my scope of analysis out from genres firmly rooted in intertextual references, and engage in more of the assumptive mode of staking rhetorical claims. This will include looking at how populist rhetoric engages in white replacement discourse in the U.S. context. I am using Brubaker's definition of what he calls the current "populist moment"⁷⁶: "the national populisms of Northern and Western Europe form[ing] a distinctive cluster within the wider north Atlantic and pan-European populist conjuncture." Like past populist movements, this populism hinges around "construing the opposition between self and other," only not, however, "in narrowly national but in broader civilizational terms."⁷⁷ I emphasize that this phenomenon is *not* about strictly national delineations, but rather about the construction of 'self' and 'other' along the lines of race and ethnicity. This is why CDA is a useful tool when it comes to understanding the structuration of white replacement rhetoric; Fairclough, for example, is deeply concerned with hegemonic constructions of self and other via process of shifting the specific to the general. White replacement discourse rests on the claim that white populations are under threat of extinction,

⁷⁶ Brubaker 1141

⁷⁷ Brubaker 1141

which allows populists to call on what Wodak terms the ‘topos of the savior’. This is a populist, rather than a nationalist, topos — despite the fact that national boundaries do have a significant role to play. White replacement discourse does not, however, fit the markers of “hot nationalism” as outlined by Billig⁷⁸, but rather as Brubaker says, the broader trans-National ethnic populism that still focuses on the importance of the nation and national boundaries as a tool to construct and control the ethnic (non-white) other.

2.2 The Myth of Common Origin

It is significant that Sellner says that Identarians/Ethnopluralists wish to preserve ‘ethnocultural identity and being sovereign nations’. National sovereignty is closely linked to ethnic purity in this text — an example of yet another assumption in the Great Replacement/white extinction discourse: a value assumption that the maintenance of racial difference is both good and necessary for the maintenance of social order — and therefore necessary to maintain the integrity of a nation-state. In their seminal text, *Woman-Nation-State*, Anthias and Yuval-Davis argue that national projects are predicated on specific formations of gender⁷⁹ — and, significantly, that ethnicity and nationality are closely linked delineations.⁸⁰ In a separate text, *Gender and Nation*, Yuval-Davis explains that nations are predicated upon a myth (or sometimes reality) of ‘common origin’, which “plays in the construction of most ethnic and national collectivities.”⁸¹ It is important to highlight that nations are collectivities that one can usually only join “by being born into it.”⁸² The “imagined community”⁸³ of the nation thus takes a biological turn, creating a unity of time

⁷⁸ Billig Michael, “Introduction,” *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995): 1-12.

⁷⁹ Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, “Introduction,” in Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias (eds.), *Women-Nation-State* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989), 6-11, 5.

⁸⁰ Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, “Introduction.” In Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias (eds.), *Woman-Nation-State*. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989): 6-11.

⁸¹ Yuval-Davis 1996, 17

⁸² Yuval-Davis 1996, 17

⁸³ Benedict Anderson, Chapters 1-3, in *Imagined Communities*. (London: Verso, 1983): 1-46.

not just in the realm of the contemporaneous, but also backwards and forwards through the past, present, and future.

It is important to note that White Extinction discourse and the biological dimension of the imagined community have a great deal to do with ideologies of sexuality and gender — particularly in regards to controlling women’s bodies (the “biological reproducers of members of ethnic collectivities”⁸⁴, as Yuval-Davis puts it. This is an important dimension of white supremacist discourse, and has significant material impact on the lives and bodies of people of all genders — particularly those with uteruses.

In this section, however, White Extinction discourse is both rooted in and reenforces this link between the myths of common ethnic and national origins, and as such demonstrates a particular focus on history and the continuity of both national narrative and the ethnic continuity of the nation itself. This makes sense, seeing as Great Replacement discourse stems from French Nationalism, while White Genocide inherits its genealogy from the white supremacy ideology which facilitated the construction of a wholly segregated society in the antebellum United States. Both theories plays on the fear of disturbing the (mythic) ethnic homogeneity of the nation.

Miller invokes a nostalgia for a white Americana, writing: “Remember how White Nebraska, Iowa, Idaho (the entire midwest, in fact) used to be? Check them out now. Virtually every city and small town has growing colored populations. And, oh how they are growing. Multiplying like rats is perhaps too strong a phrase, but who can deny the similarity?” Miller is informed more by ethnic replacement theory than white genocide/violence — but it is clear that his focus on America’s history is tied to a value of white America.

⁸⁴ Yuval-Davis 1996

Roof, on the other hand, is influenced by the fear of violence against white people. He writes: “I hate the sight of the American flag. Modern American patriotism is an absolutely joke. People pretending like they have something to be proud while White people are being murdered daily in the streets.”⁸⁵

Tarrant, interestingly, is less interested in maintaining the white homogeneity of any one nation, and instead is invested in protecting the whiteness of all ‘White nations.’ He frequently speaks of Europe’s past, but he also stretches into the future, predicting at one point that:

In 2100, despite the ongoing effect of sub-replacement fertility, the population figures show that the population does not decrease inline with the sub-replacement fertility levels, but actually maintains and, even in many White nations, rapidly increases. All through immigration. This is ethnic replacement. This is cultural replacement. This is racial replacement.⁸⁶

Breivik, as well, is rooted in a broader ‘white’ or ‘European’ nationalism more than he is particularly interested in protecting Norway. When he writes about Norway’s decline due to immigration, it is offered more as an example of the state of Europe as a whole. Breivik switches between the past, present, and future of the nation, writing: “Demographics is destiny. Never in recorded history have prosperous and peaceful nations chosen to disappear from the face of the earth. Yet that is what the Europeans have chosen to do.”⁸⁷

The killers are not alone in their preoccupation with the continuity of the nation; this is an intertextuality shared across white extinction discourse of all genres. Sellner calls the Great Replacement a “cultural” and “economic crisis”; “basically the biggest problem that any European generation has ever faced. It’s taking away this very foundation. It’s irreversible.”⁸⁸ Sellner’s words speak to a fear that the ‘foundation’ of Europe will disappear — that the society will crumble if the continuity is disrupted. This combines hegemonic

⁸⁵ Roof

⁸⁶ Tarrant

⁸⁷ Breivik

⁸⁸ Pettibone

racial construction (view of race that whiteness is something to be lost, to be polluted) with anxieties about the interruption of ethnic continuity.

2.3 Building Walls and Neoliberal States

White Extinction discourse is largely motivated by the drive to reenforce racial categories in order to preserve the integrity of the nation. Wendy Brown, along with other political theorists, argues that the drive to reinforce the boundaries of the nation actually stem from the fear of waning national sovereignty. These are both literal walls (the border wall between the US and Mexico, the EU's border wall, the wall in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories) and metaphorical ones. Brown traces the catalyst of this drive to reaffirm boundaries to the influence of neoliberalism. Brown argues that neoliberalism's influence on world order (particularly moving power from state-based authorities to international economic interests like to IMF and the World Bank), have created a 'post-Westphalian'⁸⁹ order — a world in which national sovereignty carries increasingly little impact on world events. This causes fear and anxiety, she argues (Brown elaborates on the psychological aspects of waning sovereignty, which unfortunately I do not have room to expand upon in this chapter), and is exacerbated by the tension between Neoliberalism's drive towards free economic exchange across national boundaries and the (perhaps perceived) need to protect national security. "The conventional wisdom about neoliberal globalization," Brown writes, is that "it produces opposing economy and security imperatives, with the former driving toward the elimination of barriers and the latter toward border fortification."⁹⁰ People's response, Brown argues, is to build walls reestablishing the

⁸⁹ Brown, Wendy. *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*. Princeton University Press, 1995. 42

⁹⁰ Brown, 158

boundaries of the nation. These walls “dissimulate need and dependency as they resurrect myths of national autonomy and purity in a globalized world.”

Everything outside the wall is considered dangerous, while everything within is considered pure and safe. As Brown puts it: “Danger, disorder, and violence are projected outside, and sovereign power is figured as securing a homogenous, orderly, and safe national interior.”⁹¹ The fear of ethnic replacement is tied to the fear of waning national sovereignty; the two are co-constructed and often will be used to leverage each other. This is why, as we will explore in the next chapter, white extinction discourse can be a useful tool for populists, who thrive on instigating fear of the other and performing the role of the nation’s savior.

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⁹¹ Brown 172

⁹² Brown 42

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2.4 Fear of Extinction and the Topos of the Savior

It is the sense of imminent danger and extinction that brings us back to the opening quote of this chapter, taken from the opening paragraphs of Brenton Tarrant’s manifesto. The full text of which is:

It’s the birthrates.

It’s the birthrates.

It’s the birthrates.

If there is one thing I want you to remember from these writings, it’s that the birthrates must change. Even if we were to deport all Non-Europeans from our lands tomorrow, the European people would still be spiraling into decay and eventual death. Every day we become fewer in number, we grow older, we grow weaker. In the end we must return to replacement fertility levels, or it will kill us.”⁹⁵

⁹³ Brown 158

⁹⁴ Brown 172

⁹⁵ Brenton Tarrant

Though ideologies of racial difference and the drive to taxonomize underpin the logic of the Great Replacement discourse, a key set of assumptions⁹⁶ outlining the ongoing, as well as imminent extinction, of white people underpins this discourse. The first assumption is an existential one, a question of what exists or not. This assumption is that white people are in the process of being killed — including by violence against white people as well as by ethnic and ideological replacement. Tarrant writes with clear certainty that ‘Every day we become fewer in number, we grow older, we grow weaker’.

This existential assumption extends beyond the manifesto genre, into genres considered to be mainstream in the popular understanding of the mediascape. Consider a transcribed excerpt from an interview with Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich, conducted by CNN anchor Alisyn Camerota in December of 2016:

Camerota: Crime is *down* in America. Violent crime is down, the economy is ticking up-

Newt: It is *not* down in the biggest cities.

Camerota: Violent crime *is* down. The murder rate is—”

Newt: “Then how come it’s not down in Chicago? Up in Baltimore, up in—

Camerota: There are—

Newt [interrupting]: “Your national capital, your third biggest city—

Camerota [interrupting]: But crime across the country is down. We’re *not* under siege the way we were, say, in the 80s.

Newt: The average American, and I will bet you this, does not think that crime is down. Does not think they are safer.

Camerota: But it is. We *are* safer. And it *is* down.

Newt: No. That’s your view.⁹⁷

In this example, the existential assumption is up for debate; that is, whether or not violence is increasing is a matter of ideology and belief in a certain existential ‘truth’ about

⁹⁶ Fairclough

⁹⁷ “Gingrich, Camerota Debate Crime Stats - CNN Video.” CNN, Cable News Network, 1 Dec. 2016, edition.cnn.com/videos/tv/2016/12/01/gingrich-camerota-crime-stats-newday.cnn.

the world. It is important to note that Gingrich has the power to make this claim — he has, as Chilton would say, the social power to make himself listened to. Chilton writes that “some people can create specific meaning effects, on line, in context, because they have the social power to make themselves listened to, and can thereby cause relative stabilization of such meanings and promote their circulation.”⁹⁸ Gingrich, as a prominent and well-established politician has a great deal of social power — and certainly has higher authority than the CNN correspondent interviewing/arguing with him. As such, he is able to stabilize and promote the denial of the existential assumption of the crime rate being up or down — in spite of the correspondent offering empirical statistics to the contrary.

Populist rhetoric, according to Chilton, frequently leaves terms undefined so as to leave the door open for rhetorical denials, negations, and lack of clarity over which implicit assumptions are being triggered. Populists exploit what Chilton calls “the natural schematic vagueness of words,” and specifically will leave the definition of ‘the people’ undefined, either implying or stating that “‘the people’ can be intuitively detected by other ‘real’ members of the people.”⁹⁹ Gingrich’s use of ‘the average American’ is vague at best, and he chooses the word as a way to counter the claim made by the CNN correspondent. Therefore, Gingrich is already referring to an ‘average American’ whom *he* somehow has a better knowledge of than the correspondent — a certain register of the American people that Gingrich has a relationship with, speaking to the sense of intuition that Chilton describes. This assumptive register, however, can actually be more powerful than the intertextual, according to Fairclough. All texts are “inevitably and unavoidably dialogical in the sense that any utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances with which it enters into one kind of relation or another”, thereby lending undialogized language (including

⁹⁸ Chilton 2017

⁹⁹ Chilton 2017

assumptions) the quality of being “authoritative or absolute”.¹⁰⁰ Assumptions, therefore, contain more authority because the argumentation is not articulated via a mode wherein the text appears to be in conversation — i.e. clearly making an argument. Whereas in previous genres it is established that an argument is being made to an assumed audience — consider the aims of the manifesto genre, for instance — populist rhetoric carries more weight because it is *not* clearly making an argument. Populist rhetoric presents itself as though it simply ‘is’.

Populist discourse takes the view that while the elite are “corrupt, self-serving, paralysed by political correctness, and, above all, out of touch with or indifferent to the concerns and problems of ordinary people,” the people are “virtuous, struggling, hard-working, plain-spoken, and endowed with common sense.”¹⁰¹ Later in the interview, Gingrich will state that the “average American feels” afraid for their life, favoring that intuition and emotional experience over a response based in logic. Not only does this make for an effective rhetorical strategy, but it also demonstrates how populist discourse shares a fondness for affect and feeling with white extinction discourse — a commonality that will be explored more extensively in Chapter 4. In this chapter, we will unpack how the difference between ‘knowing’ and ‘affect’ are destabilized in men’s rights discourse, and the bind between intellect and feeling that those who ascribe to ‘Red Pill’ ideology find themselves subject to.

The second assumption of white extinction is a propositional one, being that white people *will* go extinct if there is no intervention; we can understand this to be what underpins Tarrant’s sentence: “Even if we were to deport all Non-Europeans from our lands tomorrow, the European people would still be spiraling into decay and eventual death.”¹⁰² This is a propositional assumption that Tarrant shares with many other mass killers. Miller, after his

¹⁰⁰ Fairclough 2003 43

¹⁰¹ Brubaker

¹⁰² Tarrant

relentless taxonomization, boils down the white identity worthy of protecting to an Aryan archetype¹⁰³ grimly claiming that “Blue-eyed blondes ought to be placed at the head of the most endangered species list.”¹⁰⁴ Breivik includes an essay titled *Why Europe Chooses Extinction* in his manifesto, written by a fellow white supremacist moniquered “Fjordman”. This passage likens the current ‘extinction’ to the Bubonic Plague of fourteenth century Europe, writing that: “The plague reduced the estimated European population by about a third. In the next 50 years, Europe’s population will relive — in slow motion — that plague demography, losing about a fifth of its population by 2050 and more as the decades roll on.”¹⁰⁵

The propositional assumption of white extinction extends into contemporary political discourse. To examine this, I use the example of a speech by then-Presidential candidate Donald Trump speaking at the Republican National Convention in August of 2016.

Countless innocent American lives have been stolen because our politicians have failed in their duty to secure our borders...The attacks on our police, and the terrorism in our cities, threaten our very way of life...Any politician who does not grasp this danger is not fit to lead our country. Americans watching this address tonight have seen the recent images of violence in our streets and the chaos in our communities. Many have witnessed this violence personally; some have even been its victims.”¹⁰⁶

Trump vehemently asserts the existential assumption that there currently is a crisis of violence against “Americans”; once again, the definition of “Americans” is left deliberately open and vague (as it was in Gingrich’s discourse). Trump does not say overtly that the imagined community [Anderson] of “Americans” is white people of European heritage — he simply leaves the community purposefully nebulous. Consider, however, the existing context of white nationalism and the fear of white extinction, and the existing work already laid by

¹⁰³ Frazier Glenn Miller

¹⁰⁴ Frazier Glenn Miller

¹⁰⁵ Fjordman via Breivik

¹⁰⁶ Trump Republican Convention Speech 2016, via Business Insider: <https://www.businessinsider.com/trump-immigration-speech-shocking-2016-9>

white nationalists and other populists. While Gingrich insisted that ‘average Americans’ did not feel that the country was safer, Trump simply says that it *is* less safe than before. Given his social power (Chilton) and the sheer mimetic power of his speech being broadcast and rebroadcast around the country (and around the world), Trump is able to promote and even fabricate his own existential assumption, despite having no substantiating evidence to support the claim. In the common sense discourse (Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*), this might be called ‘lying’.

Consider the following excerpt from another of Trump’s speeches: his first announcement that he was running for president in June of 2015. Trump claims to have spoken with US border patrol guards, who say that this violence is quite real. Trump states:

I speak to border guards and they tell us what we're getting. And *it only makes common sense*. It only makes common sense. They're sending us not the right people. It's coming from more than Mexico. It's coming from all over South and Latin America, and it's coming probably — probably — from the Middle East. But we don't know. Because we have no protection and we have no competence, we don't know what's happening. And it's got to stop and it's got to stop fast.¹⁰⁷

As in section 2.4, we see the fear of heterogeneity — that the invaders are faceless, nameless. Not knowing where they are coming from, claiming that is it ‘more than Mexico’, and ‘probably — probably — from the Middle East’ creates a sense of indistinguishable mass, a fear which plays on the lack of taxonomy/heterogeneity that we explored in the previous section. And by claiming to have an added a degree of knowledge, both the connection to the people to talk to border guards and the innate intelligence to talk to border guards and find out what is ‘really’ going on, Trump is able to play the populist savior. Trump claims that ‘we have no protection and we have no competence’, and as a result ‘we don't know what's happening’ — both stoking fear and implying that the current US

¹⁰⁷ Trump via Washington Post: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/06/16/full-text-donald-trump-announces-a-presidential-bid/?utm_term=.f0ccfe3b6a4b

government regime (the Obama administration) has been unable to access the truth that *he* can see.

This plays directly into what Wodak would call ‘The topos of saviour.’ This is a topos which, according to Wodak, “occurs widely in right-wing populist rhetoric and refers to a simple argumentation scheme such as: ‘If danger is to be expected because of X and if A has saved us in the past, then A will be able to save us again.’” (Wodak 33). Populist discourse, according to Wodak, combines “common sense simplistic explanations and solutions (anti-intellectualism)” with the need for “a saviour, a charismatic leader who oscillates between the roles of Robin Hood (protecting the social welfare state, helping the ‘man and woman on the street’) and ‘strict father’.”¹⁰⁸ This appeals to right-wing authoritarian populists in particular because these ‘common-sense’ ‘saviors’ typically “require a hierarchically organized party and authoritarian structures in order to install law and order.”¹⁰⁹

It is impossible to trace directly whether Trump is deliberately engaging with white extinction discourse when he makes speeches like the one excerpted above. While Trump has surrounded himself with white nationalists (Steve Bannon¹¹⁰ and Steve Mnuchin¹¹¹, to name just a few), and there are many more instances of his engagement with white supremacist/white extinction rhetoric, as an academic I believe that a direct, arboreal genealogical connection between white replacement rhetoric and Trump’s words. I propose, instead, that the pathways of discourse are far more leaky channels¹¹² — constantly bleeding between genres and being used to propagate and legitimize one another. At a certain point, the intention of Trump’s words ceases to matter; it is the deliberate ambiguity of populist

¹⁰⁸ Wodak 90

¹⁰⁹ Wodak 90

¹¹⁰ “Steve Bannon Isn’t a Racist. He’s Worse.” Mother Jones, 23 June 2017, www.motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2016/11/steve-bannon-isnt-racist-hes-worse/.

¹¹¹ Swartz, Anna. “Here’s How Many of Trump’s Cabinet Appointees Have a History of Racism.” Mic.com, Mic, 7 May 2019, www.mic.com/articles/160759/here-s-how-many-of-trump-s-cabinet-appointees-have-a-history-of-racism.

¹¹² Deleuze, Gilles, and Guattari Félix. *A Thousand Plateaus*. Univ. of Minnesota P., 1994.

rhetoric that makes Trump's discourse ripe for stoking the flames of white nationalism. White extinction theories, like that articulated by Brenton Tarrant, point to Trump's election as the central point of coalescence for their movement,¹¹³ and white extinction theory is perfectly suited for propagating populist rhetoric and logic.

Chapter 3 – The Red Pill pt. 1

Sec. 3.1: Intro

The 'alt-right' is an unstable and ever-changing category. Yet, since Richard Spencer's coining of the term in 2014, a key pillar of the movement has been the men's rights and incel ('involuntary celibacy')¹¹⁴ movements, an online subculture of misogyny proliferating mainly online.¹¹⁵ The subculture is known generally as the manosphere, a "loose confederacy of interest groups, broadly known as the manosphere, has become the dominant arena for the communication of men's rights in Western culture."¹¹⁶ Though this 'confederacy' is not to be considered identical to the alt-right, there are key areas of overlap. Prominent alt-right leaders, however, define themselves and their core texts as influenced/constituted out of the men's rights/manosphere movement. One such text, *A Normie's Guide to the Alt Right* by the prominent alt-right writer Andrew Anglin, names "Opposition to Feminism and 'Gender Equality,' Support for Traditional Families" as a defining feature of the movement. He writes:

As with the claim that 'all races are equal,' the claim that 'men and women are equal' is looked at as entirely ridiculous by the Alt-Right. We believe in abolishing feminism and reestablishing traditional gender roles in society, a process which would involve

¹¹³ Tarrant

¹¹⁴ A self-defined subculture of men who wish to have sex with women, but who can't find women willing to do so.

¹¹⁵ Ging, Debbie. "Alphas, Betas, and Incels: Theorizing the Masculinities of the Manosphere." *Men and Masculinities*, 2017, doi:10.1177/1097184x17706401.

¹¹⁶ Ging

sending women back to the home to produce and raise children, largely removing them from the workplace.¹¹⁷

Meanwhile, another key text which demonstrates an alt-right attempt for self-definition is Allum Bokhari and Milo Yiannopoulos' *An Establishment Conservative's Guide To The Alt-Right*, published on Breitbart in March of 2016. In this text, the writers argue that "The so-called online "manosphere," the nemeses of left-wing feminism, quickly became one of the alt-right's most distinctive constituencies." Bokhari and Yiannopoulos quote "Gay masculinist author" Jack Donovan, who writes: "It's tragic to think that heroic man's great destiny is to become economic man, that men will be reduced to craven creatures who crawl across the globe competing for money, who spend their nights dreaming up new ways to swindle each other. That's the path we're on now."¹¹⁸

All three of these figures — Anglin, Bokhari, and Yiannopoulos — name the web forums/subcultures 4-Chan and /pol/ (short for 'politically incorrect') as key constituent communities that have galvanized the alt-right's formation. Anglin writes that:

The core identity of the current Alt-Right originates from the highly intellectual meme and trolling culture which was birthed on 4chan in the 00's. The birth of the internet age marked the first time in history that unlimited amounts of information were available at people's fingertips, and courageous men began to sort through it and discuss it wherever they were allowed to.¹¹⁹

These forums are defined by their deep and pervasive misogyny, drawing heavily on the 'pickup artist' communities of the early 2000s, and branching out into 'incel' subcultures. Perhaps even more significantly, however, the discourses of this 'manosphere' have led to a significant number of mass killings in the past few years. In fact, a defining aspect of the alt-right manosphere subculture is the indexing of mass shooters such as Elliot Rodger — whom

¹¹⁷ Anglin, Andrew. "A Normie's Guide to the Alt-Right." Daily Stormer, 31 Aug. 2016, dailystormer.name/a-normies-guide-to-the-alt-right/.

¹¹⁸ Bokhari, Allum, and Milo Yiannopoulos. "An Establishment Conservative's Guide To The Alt-Right." Breitbart, 30 Mar. 2016, www.breitbart.com/tech/2016/03/29/an-establishment-conservatives-guide-to-the-alt-right/.

¹¹⁹ Anglin 2016

the Southern Poverty Law Center names as the first ‘Alt-Right Killer.’¹²⁰ On the evening of May 23rd, 2014, Elliot Rodger commenced his “Day of Retribution” by stabbing three men to death inside his apartment before packing up several guns and driving to a nearby Starbucks, where he purchased a coffee, uploaded his video manifesto to YouTube and emailed his 137-page manifesto, entitled *My Twisted World*, to his friends and family. Rodger then began a shooting spree that would kill six people and wound fourteen others before killing himself.¹²¹ SPLC notes that out of the 59 mass shootings in the US between 1982 and 2018, 59% have been committed by white men.¹²² They write that “The alt-right is giving a growing population of aggrieved young, white men a worldview that experts find is ripe for violence. The externalization of blame for one’s own disappointing circumstances in life — and particularly its offloading onto minority communities — is one of several indicators of mass violence.”

Central to manosphere culture is the notion of ‘Red pill’ vs ‘Blue pill’, an allusion to the science fiction movie *The Matrix*. In the film, most of humanity is trapped in a state of false consciousness, in a system called ‘the matrix’, orchestrated by shadowy players. Morpheus, the protagonist Neo’s guide into resistance against the powers that control *The Matrix*, offers Neo the choice of two pills at the beginning of the film: the red pill and the blue pill. If Neo takes the red pill, he wakes up and becomes aware of all the horrors of the fabricated world and is made to more acutely suffer the agonies of its injustices. If he takes the blue pill, he may return to a state of slumber and live his life blissfully unaware that he lives inside of an exploitative simulation. Though Lana and Lily Wachowski, the screenwriters of *The Matrix*, do not overtly acknowledge references to Plato, the film’s central metaphor has been compared to *The Allegory of the Cave* many times in critical film essays — and the comparison is apt, I

¹²⁰ ‘Elliot Rodger’, *Southern Poverty Law Center*.

¹²¹ Woolf, Nicky. “Chilling Report Details How Elliot Rodger Executed Murderous Rampage.” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 20 Feb. 2015, www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/feb/20/mass-shooter-elliott-rodger-ista-vista-killings-report.

¹²² ‘The Alt-Right Is Killing People’, *Southern Poverty Law Center*.

believe. ‘Red pill’ draws on beliefs in enlightenment and bondage that have long underscored beliefs and epistemology of Western thought. Neo — who is presented to us as a ‘chosen one’, invoking assumptions of value and the narrative of the Over-man^[85] — chooses to take the red pill and see the world as it truly is.

In this chapter, I will examine key discursive elements within three texts in the manifesto-genre written by ‘alt-right killers’, Elliot Rodger, William Atchinson, and Chris Harper-Mercer. The first of these is Rodger, who was introduced in the previous paragraph. I have chosen him as an example not just for the length and “richness” of his text and the severity of his crime, but also because of the significant place he holds in the manosphere discourse, defined by its cultivation in online spaces and markers of racism and bitter misogyny.¹²³ In the past five years, Rodger has become indexed within the alt-right community; Rodger’s image and name is a popular avatar and pseudonym in online spaces of misogyny.

Of the thirteen subsequent ‘alt-right killers’ who committed their murders between 2014 and 2018, two explicitly referenced Rodger.¹²⁴ Apart from Breivik, Rodger is likely the most heavily indexed figure in the alt-right killer community. I will also look at the manifesto by Chris Harper-Mercer, a 26-year-old community college student who killed nine people (eight students and one faculty member) at Umpqua Community College in Oregon, USA in 2015. Harper-Mercer also left behind a manifesto to be published and circulated. I will also briefly examine a note left by William Atchinson, a 21-year-old who undertook a mass shooting at Aztec High School in New Mexico, USA in December of 2017, resulting the deaths of two students and his own suicide.

¹²³ ‘The Alt-Right is Killing People’, *Southern Poverty Law Center*.

¹²⁴ “Elliot Rodger: How Misogynist Killer Became ‘Incel Hero’.” BBC News, BBC, 26 Apr. 2018, www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-43892189.

In these texts I hope to trace the genealogy of the central element of belief in innate superiority and male suffering. I will argue that neither wholly to the discursive or the affective. I shall conclude that the figures of the killers demonstrate discursive-affective patterns centered around the elision of knowledge, ideology, and feeling. To explore this, I will first establish the key elements of manosphere discourse in this chapter, before then turning to Wetherell's theory of discursive-affective co-accomplishment, Tomkins' masculinity script, and Berlant's theory of public affect in Chapter 4.

3.2: The construction of beta-male hegemonic masculinity and the operationalization of victimhood

The 'manosphere' adapts the "orthodox alignment of power and dominance with hegemonic masculinity by operationalizing tropes of victimhood, 'beta masculinity', and involuntary celibacy (incels)."¹²⁵ Rodger draws on the language of the incel community, claiming that the world is divided into three types of people: 'Chads' (muscular and attractive alpha males), 'Staceys' (attractive women who care about status), and unattractive guys like Rodger incapable of attracting women (there is no category for 'unattractive women').¹²⁶ Unattractive men, according to Rodger, are capable of attracting Staceys if they are able to elevate their status by some other means — such as being wealthy. Rodger desperately tries to elevate his status by spending almost every penny he has on lottery tickets (which he never won).¹²⁷ The existence of 'alpha male' and 'beta male' masculinities is a key claim of red pill discourse; the dichotomy between the two form the basis of the incel movement,¹²⁸ and extends into a wide range of genres. Clinical psychology professor and self-help book author Jordan

¹²⁵ Ging 2017

¹²⁶ Rodger

¹²⁷ Rodger

¹²⁸ Ging 2017

Peterson — who often engages in Red Pill discourse, either via intertextuality or assumption — argues that systems of male hierarchies are innate, and found across nature:

There's this idea that hierarchical structures are a sociological construct of the Western patriarchy. And that is so untrue that it's almost unbelievable. I use the lobster as an example: We diverged from lobsters evolutionarily about 350 million years ago. And lobsters exist in hierarchies. They have a nervous system attuned to the hierarchy... And it's part of my attempt to demonstrate that the idea of hierarchy has absolutely nothing to do with sociocultural construction, which it doesn't. I'm saying it is inevitable that there will be continuities in the way that animals and human beings organize their structures. It's absolutely inevitable, and there is one-third of a billion years of evolutionary history behind that.¹²⁹

Yet despite a belief in their own status as 'beta males', many red pill manifestos claim the innate superiority of their authors — a superiority that is a product *of* their status as beta male. Harper-Mercer, for example, writes:

"My whole life has been one lonely enterprise. One loss after another. And here I am , 26, with no friends, no job, no girlfriend, a virgin. *I long ago realized that society likes to deny people like me these things. People who are elite, people who stand with the gods.* People like Elliot Rodger, Vester Flanagan, the Columbine kids, Adam Lanza and Seung Cho."¹³⁰ [Emphasis added]

Compare this section with an excerpt from Rodger's manifesto, which reads:

I saw sex as an evil and barbaric act, all because I was unable to have it. This was the major turning point. My anger made me stronger inside. This was when I formed my ideas that sex should be outlawed. It is the only way to make the world a fair and just place. If I can't have it, I will destroy it...I spent more time studying the world, seeing the world for the horrible, unfair place it is. I then had the revelation that just because I was condemned to suffer a life of loneliness and rejection, doesn't mean I am insignificant. I have an exceptionally high level of intelligence. I see the world differently than anyone else. Because of all of the injustices I went through and the worldview I developed because of them, I must be destined for greatness. I must be destined to change the world, to shape it into an image that suits me!¹³¹

The manifestos by Rodger and Harper-Mercer share a claim of innate superiority — one which is re-enforced by their suffering. Both killers believe themselves to be select and

¹²⁹ News, Channel 4, director. Jordan Peterson Debate on the Gender Pay Gap, Campus Protests and Postmodernism. YouTube, Channel 4 News, 16 Jan. 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMcjxSThD54&t=1597s.

¹³⁰ Harper-Mercer

¹³¹ Rodger

special; Harper-Mercer's occultist language leads him to declare that he is 'elite' and 'stands with the gods', while Rodger believes that his 'anger' actually 'made him stronger inside', evoking the figure of the 'super hero'. There is a shared sense of enduring trial coupled with a moral righteousness that functions to legitimize the outward direction of violence in the masculine script: this logic carves out a space of superiority within the 'beta-male', non-hegemonic masculine category. This superiority is intertwined with a belief in the speaker's innate supremacy and a superiority that stems from the lived experience of "unjust" victimhood suffered from "women's denial of their entitlement to sex." This, I argue, draws on some of the central themes of martyrdom within the Christian narrative; there is a kind of moral purity and righteousness produced by the experience of suffering, evoking Jesus on the cross with the connotation of 'cleansing others' sin' – however, by a reversed twisted logic, delivering the punishment from within the 'almighty' position. This rhetorical reversal and abuse of the very 'Christian values' the logic (indirectly) appeals to is a key element shared by the 'manosphere' alt-right discourse and 'White extinction alt-right' discourse, with its frequent emphasis on the chivalric values of high romanticism (Breivik) as well as an interpretation of Norse mythology (Frazier Glenn Miller) which draws heavily on the figure of 'Over-man' of the Nazi rhetoric .

The red pill killer discourse not only operates around assumptions of moral superiority and worth, but also a key belief in superior intelligence that comes to be implicated as the "legitimate ground" for that superiority. Rodger's claim in various forms is that that he has 'an exceptionally high level of intelligence' and possesses the capacity to 'see the world differently than anyone else'.¹³² Harper-Mercer also declares that his suffering in the world has been at the hands of "morons and idiots"¹³³ — implying that they, his 'enemies', are people who, unlike him, are lacking the intelligence and sophistication to understand the way the world

¹³² Rodger

¹³³ Harper-Mercer

really works. Harper-Mercer’s belief is complicated, however, by his occultist beliefs. He writes that the demonic forces “have always been there, speaking to me on the sidelines, controlling me. It’s only fit that I join them after death. They’ve told me what to do, showed me the way.”¹³⁴ Harper-Mercer, like Rodger, declares that he has a deeper, more accurate knowledge than that of the ‘morons and idiots’ because he is supernaturally attuned. Rodger and Harper-Mercer argue that they have gained intellectual superiority through what they have “endured”. In a strange way, this belief echoes theories of double-consciousness and diasporic epistemologies to the effect that knowledge forged in the space of the non-hegemonic has particular insight that can expose unjust power relations. Yet, it manifests in this discourse in terms of a deeply twisted appropriation of experiences of stigma and subjugation to biopower. The fact of the matter is that both of these men had relatively comfortable lives filled with plenty of status. Their affective experience informed by cruel optimism, however, was otherwise and kept them non-attentive to their relative gains and the unjust nature of their grievances.

3.3: Role of Intelligence/Intellect

It is an intricate and scary irony that manosphere killers are moved by their affective experience of anger and suffering, and yet claim to have a higher degree of intelligence and rationality than most everyone else around them. In a claim which overlaps with white replacement discourse, the manosphere killers in my data not only share the assumption of intellectual superiority but this belief is the key rallying point for the communities of violent, misogyny-driven killers. Elliot Rodger himself has been indexed within the manosphere community; he is often referred to as “Saint Elliot”; his name is frequently used as an online pseudonym in the incel community and his picture functions as a popular avatar as well. Killers

¹³⁴ Harper-Mercer

Alexandre Bissonnette (the ‘Quebec Mosque killer’), Brenton Tarrant, and even Chris-Harper

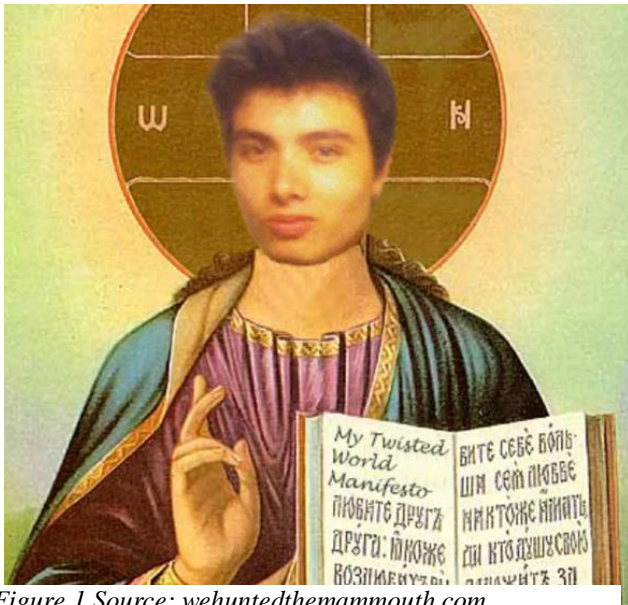


Figure 1 Source: wehuntedthemammouth.com

Mercer all refer to Rodger as a hero/person to aspire to. A key component of that aspiration is a belief in Rodger’s intelligence and capacity to see the world with clarity.

Manosphere culture in general emphasizes the value of “intelligence”. Red pill intertextualities rest on the belief that there is an innate truth, an underlying logic to the world that only a small portion of the population has the capacity to see.

This construction of ‘truth’ is one of biological essentialism (a strictly binary view of gender) and male supremacy. If we recall the quote from Anglin introduced in the introduction:

the core identity of the current Alt-Right originates from the highly intellectual meme and trolling culture which was birthed on 4chan in the 00’s. The birth of the internet age marked the first time in history that unlimited amounts of information were available at people’s fingertips, and courageous men began to sort through it and discuss it wherever they were allowed to.¹³⁵

The emphasis on intelligence and intellectualism has become a central element mediated by intertextuality in the manosphere and alt-right discourse, more generally. In Chapter 2, I explored white extinction/race realism theories, and pointed out how the white supremacist themes that also constitute the alt-right anchor themselves around the myth of white exceptionalism and scientific racism. Manosphere discourse operates similarly when invoking the emphasis on IQ – assumed to ‘be’ the unquestionable ‘measure’ of merit. Across a wide variety of manosphere discourses, Intelligence Quotient is claimed to be the legitimizing feature of white/male supremacy. This ranges from obscure Incel forums, such as lookism.net,

¹³⁵ Anglin 2016

to mainstream speakers like Peterson. A user by the name of ‘Legit Theory’ posted the following on lookism.net:

High IQ usually leads to introversion (Head orientated) which denotes an apparent lack of social charisma, which in turn can lead to high inhibition and thus, incelism. By use of the transitive law, if you lacked validation at birth due to incel genetics, you would gravitate towards to using your brain for pleasure, via mental masturbation (Scientists, Philosophers, etc., high level incel mental masturbators) you would develop a high iq as a result of no pussy. On the other hand, dudes who got validation for their genetics wouldn't even know what a computer or forum is because they are too full of social confidence, charisma and hunting prime women. They are naturally smart because of great genetics, but they aren't high iq because they never developed it by thinking in a basement to cope with no wimpenz....Christianity in it of itself is a beta as fuck religion created by weak high IQ incels, meanwhile Islam is an alpha slayer religion created by low inhibition misogynistic low iq barbaric arab slayers. slayer Muhammad was fucking prime 9 year old jailbait while Jesus was an truecel homeless virgin masturbating to the idea of God because he was a subhuman beta coping with the idea that his mother mary wasn't the hypergamous slut she was. Jesus was pretty much the OG beta incel coper, and Muhammad was pretty much the definition of an alpha male low inhibition, low iq slayer.

If your IQ is above 110, you are more likely an incel.¹³⁶

In this quote, we have nearly all the key ideas produced by intertextual references and assumptions explored in this chapter: the emphasis on ‘high IQ’; the intersection of male supremacy based on intelligence with racial supremacy; Islamophobia/anti-Muslim stigma; references to Jesus’ martyrdom and Christian supremacy combined with a strain of atheistic superiority; the operationalizing of beta male masculinity; and the trope of suffering via sexual denial as a kind of masculine gauntlet, out of which higher intelligence emerges as a compensatory technique. This also exemplifies shared intertextualities with the issues discussed in chapter 1 that we have not managed to explore yet, such as the drive towards taxonomization (‘beta’ and ‘alpha males’, and ‘prime women’), and the emphasis on genetics as destiny.

¹³⁶ “Lookism.net - Aesthetics, Red Pill, and Masculinity Discussion.” Lookism.net - Aesthetics, Red Pill, and Masculinity Discussion, My BB Group, 2002, lookism.net/.

The emphasis on intelligence, however, extends beyond the incel forum genre into that of the pseudo-academic/popular self-help genre – the most infamous contemporary representative thereof is the Canadian psychology professor, Jordan Peterson, who frequently lectures and writes on the importance of IQ:

So people can wave their hands about that all they want, but that just means they don't know what the hell they're talking about. So let's say we decided to just scrap the idea of IQ. Well, here's a problem. This is actually a problem Charles Murray and Herrnstein talked about in *The Bell Curve*. It was never really mentioned, though. It's actually an argument that the left should be very sensitive to. *Our hierarchies are increasingly IQ predicated*. And so what's happening is that the left is going to miss what's going to dispossess most people—that they are, hypothetically, concerned about—over the next 30 or 40 years....We're producing a cognitive hierarchy, and, increasingly, the spoils of the hierarchy are going to people who are in the cognitive stratosphere, so to speak. It's one thing to be really smart. It gives you an edge in a complex society, especially one that's changing very rapidly, like ours. But if you're really smart, and you know how to use a computer? You are so far ahead of people that it's like *you're a member of a different species*. If you don't think that's going to be the fundamental problem of the coming age, let's say, *then you're not very awake*.¹³⁷ [Emphasis added]

In watching Peterson's lectures, I found myself agreeing with Peterson and his positions surprisingly often. In some ways, what he says here makes a good deal of sense: that categories of race and hierarchies of intelligence impact the materiality of an individual's lived experience. Whether we like it or not — whether we agree with it or not — we live in a world where there is a correspondence between categories of race and ethnicity, metrics of intelligence, and expectations of quality of life. There are two major points however, that I wish to make to deconstruct and expose his values. First of all, Peterson writes that the 'left' is overlooking the issue of cognitive hierarchy, that 'what's happening is that the left is going to miss what's going to dispossess most people—that they are, hypothetically, concerned about'. Peterson, via creating a homogenous, straw figure of the 'left', claims that those who care about social equity are being naïve in ignoring IQ, when that is not the case. Certainly coming

¹³⁷ "IQ, Politics, and the Left: A Conversation with Douglas Murray Transcript." Jordan Peterson, 16 Nov. 2018, www.jordanbpeterson.com/transcripts/douglas-murray/.

from the analytic lens of Gender Studies, IQ is *not* a missing link or origin — it is simply not an origin to begin with. A critical social scientific discipline like Gender Studies would see the correlations of IQ scores and class/ethnic/racial category as an *articulation* and *effect* of intersecting structural inequalities within particular historical contexts and any decontextualized appeal to “IQ” as an act of fetishization that legitimizes privileges by stigmatizing social groups of people who are denied access to what constitutes that knowledge to be measured by ‘IQ’. This critical stance fundamentally rejects the epistemology that IQ should be an underlying, innate quality — yet freely admits that metrics of intelligence are social products that are coarticulated with many other similar categories of exclusion.

The second point concerns the intertextual references and assumptions that Peterson employs in his argument and the value judgements they evoke. When Peterson references scientific racists like Charles Murray and texts like *The Bell Curve*, when he says that people who score highly on IQ tests are like ‘a member of a different species’, when he says that ignoring that these are *facts* and that to not acknowledge them is to ‘not be very awake’ — he in fact articulates the assumptions mobilized by the manosphere discourse of ‘intellectual superiority’. This is evidenced in the wide variety of YouTube videos titled ‘Jordan Peterson destroys feminist logic instantly’ or ‘Jordan Peterson: Advice for Hyper-Intellectual People’ and ‘Overconfident Woman CHALLENGES Jordan Peterson’s Intelligence, Watch How He Responds’ — the last one featuring a splitscreen thumbnail where Peterson calmly lectures a shocked woman. Whether it is Peterson’s actual intent or not, his presentations have voiced the same strain of manosphere intellectual superiority as in more overtly extreme/less sophisticated genres. He plays on the idea of ‘being asleep’ vs ‘being awake’ to the ‘truth’ of innate intellectual difference and superiority.

As we have seen, the emphasis on the experience of suffering is interpreted as a means to gaining this higher level of intellect — via a drive to ‘observe’ and ‘watch’, like Rodger; a granting of ‘demonic’ knowledge, like Harper-Mercer; or in the form of IQ as a compensatory skill, as demonstrated in Legit Theory’s post. Beyond the construction of this logic, I think that this aspect of the manosphere rhetoric demonstrates the instability of the discourse vs affect categories. Knowledge, belief, and affect are produced and articulated together in contradictory ways, with the affective blending into and shaping the assemblage of knowledge. There is no linearity to their relationship as if affect consequentially interpreted/communicated by discourse, but rather their relationship is characterized by mutual patterning — a patterning shaped by public feelings and ideologies.

Chapter 4 – The Red Pill pt. 2

4.1 Introduction

Within the framework of critical discourse analysis, I wish to extend its boundaries to include not just language/text, but affect and feeling as well. Analyzing men's rights discourses, several key claims stand out: claims of male superiority, innate gender difference, theories of female conspiracy and antagonism, as well as an explicit preoccupation with firearms and military. One of the most immediately apparent themes, however, is the overwhelming sense of rage and desperation felt by the authors of the texts. A clear pattern of emotion emerges — a script of distress stemming from being 'denied' sex, turning first to anger and then to outward expressions of violence.

Postmodern thought has traditionally separated discourse and affect. Massumi posits discourse and affect as nearly antagonistic:¹³⁸ "Discourse is identified with the *conscious*, the *planned* and the *deliberate* while affect is understood as the *automatic*, the *involuntary* and the *non-representational*. Discourse and affect are seen as having an almost antagonistic relationship."¹³⁹ In this conceptualization, discourse is understood to be performative, but affect is still somehow more innate or preexisting — something to be mediated by discourse, rather than co-produced. Scholars who build on this work argue for some destabilization of this binary antagonism. Scholars such as Ian Burkitt, William Reddy, and theorists who incorporate psychological and affect theory into their research like James Russell, present discourse as a completion of affect — a means of representing or communicating the experience of affect, building it so that it might be shared with others and create social norms and expectations for experiencing feeling and emotion.¹⁴⁰ Affect is conceived as that which is

¹³⁸ Massumi, Brian. "Becoming Deleuzian." *Becoming Deleuzian*, Sage Journals, 1996, journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1068/d140395.

¹³⁹ Wetherell

¹⁴⁰ Russell, James. *Core Affect and the Psychological Construction of Emotion*. Boston College, 2003

experienced by the body, and discourse is the means of interpreting it. Even Sedgwick, who in *Touching, Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, and Performativity*, emphasizes the need to turn away from the dominance of the linguistic turn, contends that “I assume that the line between words and things or between linguistic and nonlinguistic phenomena is endlessly changing, permeable, and entirely unsusceptible to any definitive articulation”¹⁴¹ but still views affect and discourse as epistemologically and ontologically separate.

Margaret Wetherell, however, argues that affect and discourse are not separately constructed or achieved; they are, in fact, a pair of co-accomplishments that will often slip into one another via certain epistemological and ontological means: “Affect and discourse intertwine in these patterns to varying extents and in varying ways. The discursive elements may move in and out of prominence as the show of practice plays out. Sometimes they are very dominant and sometimes more peripheral.”¹⁴² Instead of discourse completing or translating affect, the two are better understood as multivalent co-constitutive electron states. As a particle, discursive-affective accomplishment can move seamlessly between affect and discourse without eroding or negating either one; or, as Wetherell puts it: “there is usually little point in trying to decompose affective activity into its bodily and discursive constituents. Bodies and sense-making are like two sides of the same sheet of paper.”¹⁴³ Wetherell argues that instead of separating language and a “preconscious and bodily” affect¹⁴⁴, scholars should instead turn to what she calls an ‘eclectic approach’: investigating “how the organization of discursive formations or ‘big discourse’ intertwines with the patterning of everyday, dynamic and immediate discursive practice.”¹⁴⁵ She calls the cycles of affect and discourse “spiraling affective discursive loops”, which “can be set in motion as

¹⁴¹ Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet*. University of California Press, 2008. P.6

¹⁴² Wetherell 53

¹⁴³ Wetherell 53

¹⁴⁴ Wetherell 55

¹⁴⁵ Wetherell 53

initial effect is narrated, communicated, shared, intensified, dispersed, modified and sometimes re-awoken even decades later.”¹⁴⁶ Wetherell is, in a sense, queering the categories of bodily experience and (language-based) ideology. Both are accomplishments, and both are cemented and performed via habitual repetition: “Attention shifts to how affect is accomplished and ordered, and moves away from adjudicating in abstract the exact relation between bodies and discourse, feelings and words.”¹⁴⁷

My objective at this point is to take this ‘eclectic approach’ of understanding the affective-discursive accomplishment as it relates to men’s rights discourse and alt-right killers. We can use the “new toxic assemblages” to “complicate the orthodox alignment of power and dominance with hegemonic masculinity by operationalizing tropes of victimhood, “beta masculinity,” and involuntary celibacy (incels).”¹⁴⁸ Wetherell provides some of the groundwork for this analysis. Her theory is elegant and well-reasoned, but she operates in a register of high abstraction that does not directly connect to the actual themes of suffering and anger that I wish to analyze. Instead, I want to turn to Lauren Berlant’s theory of “public emotion”¹⁴⁹ as one that more clearly establishes the links between ideology, power, and affect that I wish to parse through my discourse analysis.

Berlant conceptualizes ‘public emotion’ as collective ways of experiencing the world that are articulated from shared ideologies, values, socio/cultural structures, and institutions,¹⁵⁰ with a particular focus on the role that the state plays in that articulation. For Berlant, public feeling is deeply tied to both temporality¹⁵¹ and the individual’s relation to the state.¹⁵² Berlant’s concept of ‘public feelings’ draws on earlier conceptions of affect — particularly Tomkins’

¹⁴⁶ Wetherell 53

¹⁴⁷ Wetherell 53

¹⁴⁸ Ging, 2017

¹⁴⁹ Berlant, Lauren. *Cruel Optimism*. Duke University Press, 2011.

¹⁵⁰ Berlant 22

¹⁵¹ Berlant 181

¹⁵² Including Berlant’s ‘slow death’ theory, which is pertinent to this analysis but which I unfortunately do not have space to unpack.

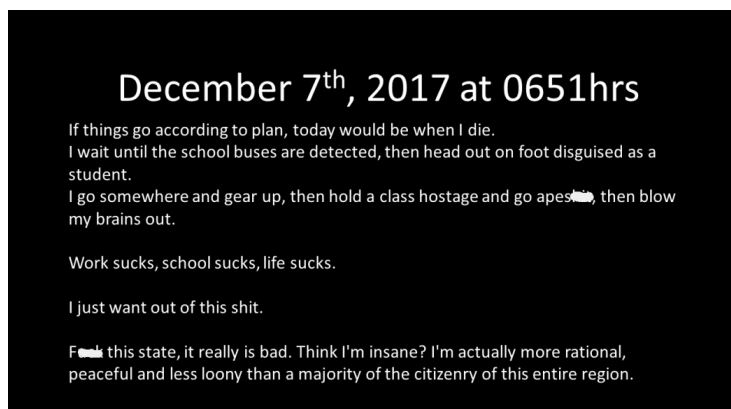
‘script theory’ (which we will explore more in the next section). Berlant views affect as a fundamentally collectively shared production, which is what makes her theory suitable to pair it with Wetherell’s affective-discourse loops. Affect is experienced and produced communally just as discourse is the produced via hegemonic consensus. Discursive interpretations of affective experience travel not just along epistemological and ontological planes, but rather leak into the shared horizontality of the biopolitical.¹⁵³

4.2 Scripts of male suffering

In the texts produced by the three selected killers — Rodger, Harper-Mercer, and Atchinson — a key theme that emerges and is repeated is that of suffering. All three killers express a profound sense of being wronged, and even targeted, by the “world”. Harper-Mercer beings his manifesto by writing:

I have always been the most hated person in the world. Ever since I arrived in this world, I have been under siege from it. Under attack from morons and idiots. I write this manifesto so that others will know of my story and perhaps find some solace in it, some kind of inspiration for their own lives.¹⁵⁴

Consider, as well, to the same effect, the photograph of the note of rage that Atchinson handed to a classmate before commencing the mass shooting at Aztec High School:



¹⁵³ Foucault 1976

¹⁵⁴ Harper-Mercer

Finally, the same act of blaming in order to justify the author's 'restorative striking back' is articulated in the following excerpt from Rodger's manifesto, titled *My Twisted World*:

All I ever wanted was to love women, and in turn to be loved by them back. Their behavior towards me has only earned my hatred, and rightfully so! I am the true victim in all of this. I am the good guy. Humanity struck at me first by condemning me to experience so much suffering. I didn't ask for this. I didn't want this. I didn't start this war... I wasn't the one who struck first... But I will finish it by striking back. I will punish everyone. And it will be beautiful. Finally, at long last, I can show the world my true Worth [sic].¹⁵⁵

These manifestos are part of the U.S. history of mass shooters — although it is not as long as one might think. In his book *Angry White Men*, sociologist Michael Kimmel explores the proliferation of white, male rage from the 1990s through the early 2010s in the U.S. and Canadian contexts. Prior to the 1990s, "school shootings" were not a public phenomenon; shootings that took place at schools were extensions of other patterns of violence which had happened to spill over into schools.¹⁵⁶ In the late 90s, nevertheless, contends Kimmel, the profile of a mass shooter "shifted dramatically. Now, the shooter was almost always white, from a suburban or rural school, using rifles or assault weapons, and opening fire seemingly randomly, killing teachers and fellow students."¹⁵⁷ Although it is worth noting that policies around gun access certainly increased young men's access to guns, what I highlight in Kimmel's words is the fact that the young men committing these mass murders are mostly middle- to upper-middle class, white or white-identified men.

The killers, statistically speaking, are not all exclusively white, as Harper-Mercer is half black/half white, while Rodger is mixed-race, with a white father and an East Asian

¹⁵⁵Rodger, Elliot, and contributed by Lauren Johnston. "ELLIOT RODGER MANIFESTO: MY TWISTED WORLD." *New York Daily News*, New York Daily News, 2014. 137

¹⁵⁶ Kimmel, Michael S. *Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era*. Nation Books, 2013. P. 165

¹⁵⁷ Kimmel 166

mother, but both of them self-identify as ‘white’. Struggles with their racial identity, I argue, is one of the constituent elements of their particularly male resentment —motivated by their (tacit) understanding that that hegemonic masculinity is intersecting with racial hegemony. A common characteristic feature shared by young men who commit mass killings is that they are well-educated, middle or upper class, and generally come from backgrounds free of particularly severe trauma or circumstances of precarity. Kimmel presents, for instance the case of the mass shooter Luke Woodham from 1997, who killed three people (his mother and two of his schoolmates) and injured seven others (also at his school). On the occasion, he handed the following note to a friend:

I am not insane. I am angry. I killed because people like me are mistreated every day. I did this to show society, push us and we will push back.... All throughout my life, I was ridiculed, always beaten, always hated. Can you, society, truly blame me[...]?¹⁵⁸

Woodham and the manifestos by the three killers in my data share this sense of victimization, this view of themselves as suffering at the hands of others without reason. Indeed, Kimmel writes, “Although it’s true that everyone needs to be a victim to even stand a chance of being heard in today’s [the early 2010s] political arena, the white-man-as-victim comes with a certain self-righteous anger that makes it distinct.”¹⁵⁹ It is this righteous anger that I wish to unpack and understand as articulated out of a particular script of masculinity. Rodger, Woodham, Atchinson, and Harper-Mercer are operating within what Tompkins calls “the macho script” — the repeated masculine performances and embodied ways of being that enact the masculinity of a particular era. The ‘heart’ of this macho script, he argues, using a paper he co-wrote with Donald Mosher,¹⁶⁰ is three-fold: “(1) entitlement to callous sex, (2) violence as manly, and (3) danger as exciting.”¹⁶¹ Sex, violence, and danger are all central to

¹⁵⁸ Kimmel 178

¹⁵⁹ Kimmel 65

¹⁶⁰ Mosher, Donald L., and Silvan S. Tompkins. “Scripting the Macho Man: Hypermasculine Socialization and Enculturation.” *Annals of Sex Research*, vol. 25, no. 1, Feb. 1988, pp. 60–84.

¹⁶¹ Tompkins, Silvan S. *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*. Springer Publishing Company, 2008. P. 787

this script — as they are to the killers’ words and actions. Beyond the ‘heart’, Mosher and Tomkins identify seven “socialization dynamics required to differentially magnify the masculine affects of a macho script.”¹⁶² The first is the affect of “distress,” which is argued to be experienced by every person from birth, and “is intensified by the socializer until it is transformed into anger.”¹⁶³ By routinely performing this script, men are conditioned (to borrow the language of social psychology) into redirecting their experience of panic or discomfort into anger.

Kimmel argues that the angry white men of the past thirty years in the Global North are being told to “translate economic anguish, psychological distress, and political confusion into blind rage,”¹⁶⁴ articulating a similar view to Tompkins’ script theory on of the transformation of anguish/distress into anger. We can see this transformation in action in a passage from Rodger’s manifesto, in which he sees a “tall, blond, jock-type guy” with “one of the sexiest girls [Rodger] had ever seen.” The couple began to kiss “each other passionately,” which made Rodger “feel so inferior and worthless and small.”¹⁶⁵ Rodger is “hurt” by seeing these two people being physically intimate — he is in distress over what he believes he is ‘entitled to’ but cannot have. Rodger’s affect then transforms to “intense hatred,” which reinforces the “lonely misery” inside him: “the sight was burned into [his] memory,” causing “a scar that will haunt [him] forever.”¹⁶⁶ The Rodger-text then proceeds to manifest the next dynamics of Tomkins and Mosher’s macho script: the “shame over residual distress and fear” is redirected towards “aggression and daring,” then seeking to combat the sense of loss of “interpersonal control” through “angry and daring dominance,” which in turn “activates excitement.”¹⁶⁷ The

¹⁶² Tomkins *ibid.*

¹⁶³ Tomkins 788

¹⁶⁴ Kimmel 39

¹⁶⁵ Rodger 88

¹⁶⁶ Rodger 88

¹⁶⁷ Tomkins 791

Rodgers-narrative performs the dynamics of the script when following the couple and reporting an act of violence committed towards them: he splashes his iced tea all over them.¹⁶⁸

In doing this, Rodger, depicted as a ‘hero’, performs two more dynamics of the macho script: he uses surprise as an “interpersonal strategy to achieve dominance by evoking fear and uncertainty in others” (by sneaking up on the couple), and this act of aggression is said to trigger his “pride over aggressive and daring counteraction [that] instigates disgust and contempt for [the couple, who Rodger now sees as] shameful inferiors” expressed by his act of throwing a drink on them that marks them with disgust.¹⁶⁹

Performing the masculine script of aggression, however, only deepens Rodger’s pain, rather than easing his suffering or anger. Rodger is said to have “felt sick with hatred that night,” “the hatred boiled inside [him] with burning vitriol.”¹⁷⁰ This is in keeping with a rhizomatic view of affect — one in which feelings are not drawn up from the bottom and made manifest on the surface, but rather are produced out of prior feelings and leak into future feelings along a multiplicity of vectors as described by Deleuze and Guattari’s metaphor of the rhizome.¹⁷¹ Rodger’s expression of his affective experience fits perfectly with Berlant’s view of desire (both sexual and otherwise) as a product of public feeling in her book *Cruel Optimism*, as we will explore in the next section.

The Harper-Mercer narrative follows a strikingly similar affective script. The author expresses pain at being denied sexual affection from women and social contact with friends, as well as social status and material success. He writes: “I had no friends, no girlfriend, was all alone. I had no job, no life, no successes. What was it that was supposed to happen, what great event was it that was supposed to make me realize how much there was going for me.”¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ Rodger 88

¹⁶⁹ Rodger 88

¹⁷⁰ Rodger 88

¹⁷¹ Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. “Introduction: Rhizome.” *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Brian Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, 3-25.

¹⁷² Harper-Mercer

Harper-Mercer expresses the same suffering as Rodger — one rooted in the pain of being denied that which one is believed to be entitled to. His fear and distress is over not receiving that which he feels/believes he has been promised. This demonstrates, once again, the slippery duality of discourse and affect that anchors this experience of injury. Harper-Mercer, like Rodger, then redirects his pain and shame into “aggression and daring,” seeking “angry and daring dominance,” which in turn “activates excitement.” Harper-Mercer turns to the occult to do so, invoking intertextual references to demonology and occult-inspired pop-culture as the allegedly only domain of ‘communication’ beyond reasoning:

But for people like me there is another world, a darker world that welcomes us. For people like us this all that’s left. My success in Hell is assured. They will give me the power that I seek. They have always been there, speaking to me on the sidelines, controlling me. It’s only fit that I join them after death. They’ve told me what to do, showed me the way.¹⁷³

Sec. 4.3: An amplification of hatred: The construction of public affect in the neoliberal order

In Lauren Berlant’s *Cruel Optimism*, she argues that there is a connection between the performance of state-driven ideologies of masculinity and racism and the impact they have on the subject. Berlant argues that ‘happiness’ is a key value in neoliberal governmentality,¹⁷⁴ positioned as the condition of living ‘the good life’.¹⁷⁵ Individuals are attached to striving for the ideal of happiness which is, however, fundamentally within the given institutional organization of life. Consequently, this attachment is an act of “cruel optimism” in that the subject’s “relation of attachment [is] to [structurally] compromised conditions of possibility.”¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ Harper-Mercer

¹⁷⁴ Blinkley 2014

¹⁷⁵ Berlant 47

¹⁷⁶ Berlant 47

This fantasy of ‘good life’ is central to Berlant’s argument. She views it as a set of possible lived temporal materialities rooted in various “moral-intimate-economic”¹⁷⁷ conventions. They include the possession of status or objects, the desire for romantic (heterosexual) love, and the drive towards certain political realities. The ideal of good life is something which “wears out the subject” by its unattainability, while at the same time it “find[s] conditions of possibility within it.”¹⁷⁸ For Rodger, this ‘good life’ at its core entails the normative ideal of having sex with a ‘beautiful’, ‘sexy’ woman (a “beautiful, hot blonde”¹⁷⁹) and, by extension, the status associated with “the entitlement to a female body.” More specifically, what Rodgers really wants is the lack of the *pain* of not having sex re-articulated within the ideology of heterosexual “romantic love” that works only to expose the cruelty of Rodger’s optimism: “All I ever wanted was to love women, and in turn to be loved by them back.”¹⁸⁰

It is one thing to argue that ontologically objects of desire are fundamentally unobtainable but it is another to argue that this unattainability is the effect of social arrangements of relations. As Raewyn Connell argues in developing his concept of hegemonic masculinity: There is no masculinity that is ever truly hegemonic¹⁸¹, no ‘hot blonde’ who will ever fully fulfill male fantasy. Objects of desire can never be attained — and, in fact, are defined by the act of striving for them (hence the name as ‘object’ of (the action of) desire). There is an irreconcilable tension to these objects that Berlant calls “endurance in the object.” Although the failure to actually obtain these objects causes anger, disappointment, and shame within us,

¹⁷⁷ Berlant 10

¹⁷⁸ Berlant 47

¹⁷⁹ Rodger 52

¹⁸⁰ Rodger 137

¹⁸¹ Connell, R. W., and James W. Messerschmidt. “Hegemonic Masculinity.” *Gender & Society*, vol. 19, no. 6, 2005, pp. 829–859., doi:10.1177/0891243205278639.

we still are drawn to “proximity to the cluster of things that the object promises”¹⁸² precisely by the force of the structural arrangements of what emerges as “desirable object.”

The more Rodger strives to ‘attain’ a hot blonde, the more he is made prisoner to his desire. Rodger buys clothing, lottery tickets, and even tries to pressure his mother into marrying a wealthy man that she dates at one point (which she refuses to do). Without any access to reflections on the social organization of “good life,” Rodger is made to constantly suffer the double bind of optimism and acts out the macho script of transforming the suffering into anger over and over again. Rodger is positioned to repeatedly experience an affective crisis — what Berlant calls a “crisis of ordinariness.” He does not consider himself attractive enough, rich enough, or valued enough to attain his object of desire: he is ordinary (with the implication that ordinary is by definition not the hegemonic ideal, which is ever unattainable for him to achieve). This ordinariness, according to Berlant, creates “an impasse shaped by crisis in which people find themselves developing skills for adjusting to newly proliferating pressures to scramble for modes of living on.”¹⁸³ What Rodger is reaching for is not actually sex or intimacy, but rather an end to his suffering: “My one wish is to feel satisfied for the way my life is.”¹⁸⁴

I want to underscore that Berlant’s concept is not rooted in the politically teleological; she is determined to move beyond “heuristic ‘neoliberalism’” which presents a “world-homogenizing sovereign with coherent intentions that produces subjects who serve its interests, such that their singular actions only seem personal, effective, and freely intentional, while really being effects of powerful, impersonal forces.”¹⁸⁵ Berlant chooses instead to develop a “materialist context for affect theory,” joining Massumi¹⁸⁶ in arguing that ““affective atmospheres are shared, not solitary, and that bodies are continuously busy judging their

¹⁸² Berlant 46

¹⁸³ Berlant 21

¹⁸⁴ Rodger 69

¹⁸⁵ Berlant 34

¹⁸⁶ Massumi 1996

environments and responding to the atmospheres in which they find themselves.”¹⁸⁷ Rather than presenting the genealogy of a state’s need to control its subjects through their behaviors and experiences, Berlant attempts to trace cruel optimism through “the affective component of historical consciousness.” I chose Berlant because she is specifically refraining from forcing a political theology onto the bind of cruel optimism. Her work hinges on an understanding of feelings as publicly constructed (by state and economic institutions/forces) to be sure, and yet her approach is rather a “symptomatic reading of the objects of cruel optimism” while avoiding “the closures of symptomatic reading that would turn the objects of cruel optimism into bad and oppressive things.”¹⁸⁸ This is what makes Berlant’s theory so compelling and useful for the project of understanding this particular vein of discursive-affective accomplishment in alt-right discourses —without being limited to a strictly political analysis of ‘reason’.

Berlant draws on the concept of the biopolitical (in a Foucauldian sense), while she incorporates the concepts of performativity (Austin via Butler). She draws heavily on Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of difference and repetition — a reiteration of performance, identity, action, or thought (amongst others) which are both rooted in and act to reify “dogmatic image[s] of thought.”¹⁸⁹ The repetition of public feelings makes us, as state subjects, willing to have our “memories rezoned by the constant tinkering required to maintain the machinery and appearance of dependable life.”¹⁹⁰ Cruel optimism operates by making us into state subjects, haunted by the effect that “[our] knowledge is a repetition of a something [we] can’t quite remember.”¹⁹¹ As long as we are caught in this matrix of power, we are made into “docile, compliant, good sports,”¹⁹² effectively precluding any personal and political sovereignty.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁷ Berlant 33

¹⁸⁸ Berlant 33

¹⁸⁹ Deleuze and Guattari

¹⁹⁰ Berlant 60

¹⁹¹ Berlant 60

¹⁹² Berlant 60

¹⁹³ Berlant 485

Rodger illustrates the connection between economic influence and gender performance when he develops an obsession with money in the hopes that becoming rich would get him a girlfriend. He fantasizes about becoming rich, writing: “If I was a millionaire and owned a [beautiful mansion I] could have any girl I want.” Not only that, but “being in that position would make up for all of the misery I’ve had to go through in the past... and making up for it is my most important goal in life. My one wish is to feel satisfied for the way my life is.”¹⁹⁴ All Rodger wants is to end his suffering by having sex with a woman — it is one third of the heart of his macho script (according to Tomkins and Mosher), his “entitlement to callous sex,” because that makes him an orderly state subject.

¹⁹⁴ Rodger 69

Conclusion

At the beginning of this thesis, I asked: What, if any, are the key claims made by alt-right texts, as can be traced from the manifestos of seven mass murderers? I sought to observe and isolate shared claims between different alt-right texts in an effort to establish what exactly it constituted as a discourse. I used CDA to undertake this analysis, focusing on two of the main themes I observed within the texts: White Replacement discourse and Red Pill discourse. At their core, these two discourses are the product of nearly the same ideological production: the maintenance and reestablishment of both white and male hegemonic powers. I think that there is an epistemological significance in approaching the two hegemonic categories in separate chapters; when it comes to the details and fine machinations of how race and gender are structured, there are significant differences that warrant separate analyses — consider, for example, how the ‘drop of blood’ theory creates a fundamental understanding of race that is based in the notion of polluting whiteness. Not only is it important to understand that conceptually, but it also allows us to track claims of white purity across many genres.

‘Alt-right’ is such an unstable, ill-defined concept in the common discourse, it was its ambiguity that actually appealed to me. I wanted to take the tools of CDA and see if I could use them to unpack the structuration based on what was actually present in the text. I chose the manifesto genre for a few reasons: it is perhaps the ‘easiest’ genre in which to view alt-right discourse (because of the didactic nature of manifestos as a category), as well as because I was curious to read the texts that are intended to (and often succeed in) radicalizing young people. While it is certainly not manifestos alone that are responsible for inciting violent mass-killings based on racism and misogyny — in fact, I suspect that the softer ‘assumptive’ modes of populist discourses and certain strains of media are often far more reaching and impactful — they are important to understand. Part of the frustration I have felt when reading analyses or

primary texts (a tweet by Pettibone, for example) about the reactionary far-right is how difficult it can be to prove that those ideologies incite violence. Even while articulating ideologies rooted in the fundamental belief that white people must assert dominance and proliferate over people of color, and that men have to ‘take back’ their place in the ‘natural’ hierarchy, many texts and figures many to engage in rhetorical denial and dog whistling. Unlike in manifestos, these texts will not call for open violence by overtly addressing the reader; they will instead often hint at it, using intertextualities or assumptions to signal or imply the need for violence. Using the manifesto genre to establish the parameters of alt-right discourse that can then be linked with other genres/a variety of texts makes it possible to track the link with violence and calls to violence.

In this project — and, indeed, in this MA program more broadly — I have learnt to radically destabilize the notion of a uni-vector, linear discourse. Affect theory was particularly illuminating to me in this, but CDA as well does not generally consider discourse as a top-down, straight line traveling from text to text. One of the tools that Gender Studies has equipped me with is the ability to understand a register of abstraction, inside of which operates structures of power and hegemony, which then are articulated in different modes and processes. In this thesis I conclude that not only is the map of alt-right discourse much more rhizomatic that I had originally thought (with links between the various texts, speakers, and concepts traveling backwards and forwards, legitimizing each other) but also that the delineation between ‘fact’ and ‘feeling’ is paper-thin. From this project, I conclude that ‘feelings’ and scripts of whiteness, masculinity, ethnic identity — these exist to the individual as being the same as if they ‘know’ something.

Apart from the project itself — which, though imperfect and not without its limitations, I am quite proud of — I am happiest with the level of analysis I have gained. One year is not a

long time to do an MA, but I look back at my patterns of thinking and the analysis I was capable of in August of 2018, and I can see a remarkable amount of growth. I believe that I have access to a whole register of abstract, almost geometric thinking when it comes to matrices of power and the articulation of ideology. The true accomplishment of this project has been in equipping me with the analytical tools to parse the world around me — something that I believe will serve me well as both a thinker and writer.

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