

# White Extinction: metaphysical elements of contemporary Western fascism

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## Introduction

We've not the slightest yearning for the social world: the storms and omens of the Cosmos will suffice. Ludwig Klages

If the 2016 US Presidential Election reminded us of the resilience of racism and white supremacy in the United States, it also demonstrated that white racial fascism has become revitalised for a new generation in north America, Brexit UK, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. In recent years, the Western far-right has shown considerable political energy and multiple political forms. Its ideologies appear to be heterogeneous and capricious, making it difficult to capture them within elementary descriptions of a core ideology or methods of organization.

Despite this variety, this article aims to elaborate deeper metaphysical tendencies that underlie the superficial diversity of today's far-right. The article focuses on some key themes in the political theology and eschatology of contemporary white racial fascism, themes which concern fascist metaphysics in its broadest sense. It draws eclectically on material from the European New Right and the US alt-right, and it links this material to older themes and ideological figures. Because the intellectual universe upon which the far-right draws is wide, I consider some emblematic writers that have influenced the European New Right and the US alt-right, including Julius Evola, Ludwig Klages, Hans Günther and Arnold Gehlen.

‘White extinction’ is, I argue, a defining idea of the contemporary Western far-right. The ‘fear of white extinction’ unites virtually all European and north American far-right tendencies, despite the ideological dissimilarities and conflicts between the alt-right, the alt-lite, the counterjihad movement, among others. The idea of ‘white extinction’ is associated with several metaphysical themes that are important in contemporary fascism: the rejection of abstract universals, the institution of occult naturalism and vitalism, the mobilization of folk anthropologies of culture, and ideas of cosmic destiny. These are linked in fascist thinking and their logical progression is towards cleansing violence. Each of these themes generate new dimensions of racism in contemporary fascist thinking.

After briefly considering the ideological diversity within the contemporary far-right, and the distinctions it makes between itself and ‘the false right’, I look at the deeper Nietzschean heritage upon which the far-right depends, including the ways in which the far-right rejects equality, abstract knowledge and universal humanism. It is from these rejections that a potent ‘biocultural’ form of racism emerges, one linked to a fascist metaphysics of nature. Fascist naturalism is a key ideological engine for racism. I therefore consider some older thinkers who supply powerful ideologies of nature’s vitalism. A complement to naturalism is the use by fascists of philosophical anthropology, also considered later. Metaphysical thinking has consequences for contemporary fascist understandings of the actions to be taken in a period that fascists consider as presenting their best opportunity since the end of the Second World War (Andersen 2018). Action is often linked to a cosmology of destiny that leads to a regressive logic of violence, a point elaborated in the conclusion.

The intellectual structures of contemporary fascism, as noxious, incoherent or absurd as they are, nevertheless represent a sustained critique of liberal modernity, one that often aims to mimic progressive analyses (Griffin 2000; Ferraresi 1987; Bhatt 2012). In developing the arguments, I have largely considered texts from tendencies associated with the European New Right (Andersen 2018; de Benoist 2011; Faye 2010; Faye 2011; Faye 2016; Friberg 2015; Generation Identity 2013; Krebs 2012; Venner 2015; Willinger 2013; Willinger 2014) and the US alt-right (such as Johnson 2016; Johnson 2018; Anglin 2016), but have also considered related tendencies (Dugin 2014; Donovan 2012; Land n.d.; Moldbug 2008). The range of authors exemplify important ideological strands in the European New Right and the US alt-right. The far-right Swedish activist, Joakim Andersen's text (2018) is often referred to as it illustrates important themes in the European New Right's dominant world view. The former European New Right ideologue, Guillaume Faye's work presents a combative contrast to other 'ethnopluralist' positions. If the figures chosen lean towards the European New Right, it is because the latter represents the most sophisticated contemporary fascist project, one that has attempted to ideologically hegemonize the north American alt-right and move it towards 'identitarian' positions.

While the narrative below risks giving a synthetic coherence to fascism that does not (indeed, cannot) exist, it is fascism's intrinsic ideological incoherence that energises its thinking. I also do not mean to evade sharp polarizations with the far-right, such as between the alt-right and alt-lite, or as evidenced by vicious quarrelling within the US alt-right or the European New Right. Nor do I want to ignore differing ideological tendencies and their varied lineages: the origins of the international counter-jihad movement, the neo-reactionaries and the traditionalists are different to those of the alt-right or the European New Right. But I hope to show that, despite the differences between aristocratic and demotic forms of fascism today, they are animated by

similar metaphysical structures and are part of the same essential political project, one that seeks to extinguish the entire ground of universal humanism, equality and liberal modernity.

### **Unity in diversity**

The extent of far-right ideological diversity indicates both vitality and volatility. If we pluck and group together ideas and symbols that hover around today's far-right, we derive strikingly varied conceptual inventories. From the European New Right – arising from the former *Nouvelle Droite*, a key ideological engine for white identitarian and 'ethnopluralist' politics that emerged from the late 1960s – we get ideas about enrootedness, identity, 'money-power', 'bioculture', metapolitics, and a vitalist idea of *thumos* that invokes spirited anger, action and recognition (Andersen 2018). Elements of the far-right concerned with science, technology and racial futures, give us a conceptual list that includes Guillaume Faye's 'archaeofuturism' (2010), Nick Land, a former cultural studies academic, hyperventilating about the face tentacles of H.P. Lovecraft's lumbering Cthulhu (Land n.d.), human biodiversity, the artificial intelligence 'technosingularity', cameralism, Zombie Apocalypse, sea-steading, and 'the Cathedral' (Moldbug 2008). Far-right trolls from 8chan and 4chan disseminated the puerile imagery of Pepe the Frog, '1488', the Kek religion, cuckservatives and the like. From its large, well-organized misogynist wings, we get ideas that include 'game', Männerbund, the gang, Fight Club, sex between tribal men, incels, and men going their own way (MGTOW). The vast international counter-jihad movement delivers the symbolism of the Crusades, the Knights Templar, the 'Gates of Vienna' and the thousand-year war against Islam (Bhatt 2012). From far-right 'traditionalists' we hear about the power and wisdom of Asatru, Odin, Baldur and Freyr (McNallen 1985), organic orders, *ksbatriya* warriors, the present, dismal age of Kaliyuga (Evola 1995) and the impending doom of Ragnarök (Von

Schnurbein 2016; Andersen 2018), the latter two signifying a narrative of decline and catastrophe that travels across the far-right.

The contemporary far-right contains many ideas about its racially homogeneous utopias: Eurasia (Dugin 2014), Eurosiberia (Faye 2010), the Northwestern Territorial Imperative (<http://northwestfront.org/>), white ethnostate (Gardell 2003), the Proto-Indo European homeland (de Benoist 2016), Avalon (<https://tradworker.org/>) and European Empire. Similarly, it has several spatial imaginations of its enemies, from the despised globalism and *mondialisme*, to the ‘Zionist Occupation Government’, to ‘the fear of a black planet’ and massing brown hordes encircling the enfeebled ‘Camp of the Saints’ that represents the white West (Raspail 2018).

Much of today’s far-right happily generates antisemitic imagery of clandestine, malign Jewish influence, from triple echo brackets to euphemisms such as ‘money-power’, the rootless cosmopolitan, globalism, ‘Hollywood’, cultural Marxism, ‘Soros money’, the Judeo-Christian, the ‘life-deniers’, and many more. For sections of the far-right, the eternal war between Aryan and Jew continues apace. For others, particularly the counter-jihad movement, the cosmic war is against Muslims and ‘Islam’. These antisemitic and antimuslim strands merge or diverge significantly among differing far-right tendencies, but both typically join older antimigrant, racist strands (Bhatt 2012).

Recent far-right activities have ranged from the 2017 Charlottesville ‘Unite the Right’ demonstrations and the murder of Heather Heyer, the 2019 Christchurch massacre, the 2017 Generation Identity-led attacks on refugee boats on the Mediterranean, numerous Proud Boy attacks on counter-demonstrators and feminists, a proliferating range of anti-Muslim activities

across Europe, to high profile events (the 2017 ‘Deploraball’), conferences, international alliances, and manifold online activities. The intellectual resurgence – indeed, vocal intellectual triumphalism – of the far-right is demonstrated in a multitude of blogs, YouTube videos, and publishing ventures, including Arktos Media (Daniel Friberg and John Morgan), *Countercurrents* (Greg Johnson) and *Radix* (Richard Spencer). These activities join the work of older white supremacist figures (such as Jared Taylor, Kevin McDonald, Steve Sailer and David Duke) and white supremacist libertarians (for example, Herman Hoppe.) The ‘God-Emperor’ Trump, at least until he agreed to the 2017 airstrikes in Syria, magnified internationally far-right ideas and voices.

The sheer profusion of ideas that animate the contemporary far-right signals an expanding discursive universe. The ideas may be incoherent, juvenile or deadly, but their collective form and expansive nature is of considerable significance. The US alt-right started to disintegrate organizationally after Trump’s election, both because of the public rage that followed neo-nazi Richard Spencer’s celebration of Trump’s election at an alt-right rally (‘Hail Trump! Hail our people! Hail victory!’), and because of the Charlottesville violence. But it had already energized and coalesced several ideological currents. The desire for a white ethnostate has often been used to distinguish the alt-right from the so-called alt-lite. Figures in the alt-lite, itself a tantrum of vanities, often feigned distress at their association with the neo-nazism they had happily cultivated until public opprobrium became a judgement on their brand value. Yet, the alt-lite has been extremely influential in disseminating neo-nazi or white supremacist ideas. The terms ‘alt-right’ and ‘alt-lite’ function popularly as deceits that work to sanitize neo-nazi and racial fascist movements that thrive on dishonesty, deception and euphemism, just as the ‘ironic’ styles of much contemporary Western fascism are strategies of dissimulation. The vast ecology of online white supremacist personalities, both ‘alt-right’ and ‘alt-lite’, include Mike Cernovich,

Christopher Cantwell, Gavin MacInnes, Paul Joseph Watson, Jack Posobiec, Tara McCarthy, Colin Liddell, Brittany Pettibone, Lauren Southern, Andrew Anglin, Lana Lokteff, Ayla Stewart, Kyle Prescott, Faith Goldy, Jason Kessler, Kyle Chapman, Colton Merwin, 'Vox Day', Mike Peinovich, among numerous others. Many more tendencies have been unleashed since 2016.

Despite the diversity of ideas, I will argue that the ideological core to each major far-right tendency is provided by the theme of 'white extinction', a phrase used by the US neo-nazi, Greg Johnson (2018). This theme crosses the European New Right, the alt-right, the alt-lite, the 'manosphere', the traditionalists, the accelerationists, the international counter-jihad movement, and key strands of white supremacist 'apocalyptic libertarianism' and 'anarcho-capitalism'. The idea of white extinction travels across so many far-right tendencies as to be definitive of contemporary western fascism. The alt-lite and alt-right are indeed united in a common language of the fear of white extinction. Similarly, even if the coiffured political styles of many far-right activists do not immediately feel like those of the racial fascism of the past, there are striking continuities between today's Western fascism and older forms of Fascist, National Socialist and neo-nazi racial thought, a family semblance organised around the themes of white extinction, white supremacy and 'racial' eugenics. I am not suggesting there are no other organising principles – indeed, political misogyny is key for the far-right, as are other ideologies of hierarchy, 'anti-capitalism' and atavism. The fear of white extinction, however, is a driving logic, one not simply predicated on 'biology' but on a complex metaphysics of 'cultural' and 'civilizational' decline and displacement.

One form that the theme of white extinction takes is the ubiquitous idea of 'white genocide', the latter imagined on the far-right in numerous ways. It is rendered in 'biological' and 'genetic'

terms, typically as the decline of white populations or their replacement through genetic ‘mixing’ – as Brenton Tarrant, the Christchurch killer, put it, ‘It’s the birthrates. It’s the birthrates. It’s the birthrates.’ (Tarrant 2019). But ‘white genocide’ is also imagined in civilizational terms through which ‘culture’ with ‘biology’ are merged in sophisticated ways. The theme of the displacement of whites by non-white migrants has a long pedigree, including in National Socialism and north American white supremacy (Günther 1927; Stoddard 1921). It has been regenerated more recently as ‘The Great Replacement’ by the French gay writer, Renaud Camus (2011), and articulated by the Charlottesville neo-nazis (‘You will not replace us!’). It is not an accident that Tarrant’s ‘manifesto’ was titled ‘The Great Replacement’. When Steve Bannon made repeated references to the French writer, Jean Raspail’s novel, *The Camp of the Saints* (2018), he was seeking to invoke this precise fear of a beleaguered white population besieged by a (in Raspail’s imagining, Satanic) multitude that aimed to engulf, displace, destroy it (Grady 2018). In far-right discourse, the ‘answer’ to alleged white extinction is often the imperative of *exit*, to escape elsewhere, whether this be to a ‘white ethnostate’ in the US, an island in the Pacific, or to white sovereign autonomy somewhere in international waters (Haider 2017). In these examples, we hear the echo of ‘the 14 words’ of Aryan supremacist David Lane of the violent terrorist organization, The Order: ‘We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children’ (Michael 2009).

If Lane’s words were previously used to distinguish neo-nazism from other right-wing political tendencies, they resonate now in the political mainstream. Yet, if shared fears of an imagined ‘white extinction’ make distinctions between many ‘traditional’, ‘populist’ and ‘far’ right tendencies difficult to discern, the far-right is clear about what distinguishes it from traditional (Burkean) or modern (post-Buckley) conservatism (Gottfried 2015). The traditional right is a ‘false’ right beholden to the state, the interests of a governing managerial elite (Francis 2016) or,



more mysteriously, an imagined entity euphemized as ‘money-power’. In contrast, the ‘organic’, ‘deep’ or ‘real’ right (Friberg 2015: 16) is said to be concerned with the deep structure of a society, its ‘blood’ and ‘ancestry’, and the threats that these face from ‘dysgenic’ tendencies (Andersen 2018: 35). As with much of the far-right globally, attention to the nature of the society and its ‘deep’ culture, an ideological focus on the ‘nation’ and civil society rather than the ‘state’, is archetypal. The republican state is seen as a foreign imposition upon an ancestral, organic nation. The obsession with ancestry does not necessarily imply an antediluvian imagination. It is worth remembering that a key author of the first Fascist Manifesto, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, was also an author of the Futurist Manifesto (Marinetti 2009). Futurism and fascism have a significant historical relation that continues in far-right ‘accelerationist’ strands, including the aristocratic fascism of Curtis Yarvin (Mencius Moldbug) and Nick Land who, while claiming to be distant from ‘white nationalism’, leave little space between it and their own, glaring racial anxieties (Land n.d.; Moldbug 2008).

The dominant strands of contemporary fascism are strongly influenced by a series of fundamental philosophical questions whose shape is given by the intellectual resources upon which contemporary fascism draws. As has been noted often (Ferraresi 1987; Griffin 2000; Bar-On 2007), these resources are frequently writings from inter-war ‘Revolutionary Conservative’ authors in Germany, Britain, France, Italy and elsewhere, but also include key figures from National Socialism and Italian Fascism. If we consider the influences on the European New Right, with some of these figures also important for the US alt-right, we find the philosophy of pessimism (Julius Evola, Oswald Spengler) and authentic being (Martin Heidegger, Ludwig Klages, Ernst Jünger), the rejection of liberalism (Carl Schmitt, Dominique Venner and numerous others), natural order, hierarchy and race (Hans Günther, Vilfredo Pareto, Anthony Ludovici), racial science and philosophical anthropology (Hans Blüher, Cesare Lombroso,

Arnold Gehlen, among numerous others), the racial soul (Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss, Gustave Le Bon), and occultism (René Guénon, Julius Evola, Savitri Devi). The philosophy of the Italian racial Fascist, Julius Evola is ubiquitous and informs a very wide range of far-right currents (the European New Right), groups (Identity Evropa in the US), movements (Generation Identity in Europe), parties (Golden Dawn in Greece) and traditionalist projects (Sedgewick 2004). A key aim of far-right intellectual endeavours is to redeem from an earlier period and promote today exhaustive critiques of liberal modernity, and cultivate alternative cosmogonies in which racism and the violent 'struggle' against 'white extinction' become necessary conclusions.

### **Nietzsche's children**

If there is a key distinction between fascism and most other modern political ideologies, it relates to equality, a concept fascism wholly rejects. Looking at *how* equality is disavowed theoretically provides us with a starting point from which to explore the far-right's metaphysical universe. Nietzsche's hyperbolic raging against equality is important here because it contains elements that travel largely unchanged into today's fascism. Nietzsche bound the idea of equality to 'a total degeneration of humanity', a brutal levelling into a herd of 'stunted little animals' (Nietzsche 2002: 92, 102). If, for Nietzsche, equality meant a flattened, degenerate modern life, then the task was not simply to create a new philosophy but to gather 'the force that compels the will of millennia into new channels' (*ibid.* 91).

In liberal philosophy, equality refers to an attribute such that individuals are treated equally with respect to that attribute. This also implies an autogenous relation between equality, fairness and justice (Dworkin 1981). Within deontological liberal political traditions, equality can also refer to

an apparently universal moral and ethical purpose or capacity for rationality or morality (Kant 2012). However, in no mainstream liberal tradition does equality imply sameness of identity, since equality would have no purpose if all individuals were identical. The idea of equality is also meaningful because it is based on philosophical abstractions about what it means to be human: it contains presumptions about abstract universalism and humanism, just as ‘the human’ is a necessary abstraction that precedes the idea of equality. This also means that the idea of abstraction *itself* precedes any abstract concept, such as the universal human, a point that is significant for the kind of epistemology that some European New Right fascists deem important.

Informed by Nietzsche, and by the metabolism of the latter by Julius Evola, many contemporary far-right philosophical tendencies reject equality and abstract universal humanism (de Benoist 2011). In Evola’s aristocratic fascism, equality only exists between people who exist at the same ‘degree’, their rights and freedoms not being the same as those at lower ‘degrees’ (Evola 2002: 137). When conjoined with democracy or socialism, equality ‘levels’ humanity, consigning it to a mediocre, grey world of ‘sameness’ (Evola 2002; de Benoist 2011). A loathing of ‘mediocrity’ travels from Nietzsche into virtually every contemporary far-right current, from aristocratic fascism and neo-nazism to accelerationism and libertarianism, its ubiquity suggesting that the scream against mediocrity is a nervous wail about it. This point is not a superficial barb: the fear of the mediocre is a narcissistic disavowal of the recognition of one’s *ordinary* humanness.

Instead, for Evola:

The person is an individual who is differentiated through his qualities, endowed with his own face, his *proper nature*, and a series of attributes that make him who he is and

distinguish him from all others – in other words, attributes that make him fundamentally *unequal*. (Evola 2002: 135)

In his fascism, and carried into the work of the European New Right's most prolific ideologue, Alain de Benoist, perhaps the mortal sin of equality is *replaceability*, that any one person can be replaced by or exchanged with any other, since liberalism is claimed to have expunged that which makes each individual unique. There is indeed a voluble terror about sameness within much fascist writing, the fear of being a 'meaningless duplicate' (Evola 2002: 134), extinguished, *extinct*. The fear of replaceability represents a severely anxious individualism that remains in tension with the collectivist dreams of fascism (since fascism also wants to create the 'herd', but of a different kind.) This fear culminates in the terror of 'The Great Replacement', revealing that the protean terror is of being replaced by those deemed non-white.

Several fascist ideologues, following Nietzsche, reject abstraction itself as a conceptual nominalism that illegitimately 'proceeds from the particular to the general' (Sunic 2011: 151; Griffin 2000). The Nietzschean argument is that knowledge about an object cannot be generalised, it only exists in its specific nature. For Nietzsche, this is because there is not a definite 'thing' that we can know, only its effects (relations of power) on other 'things' (Nietzsche 1968: 302, 314, 317). There is here an unqualified rejection of the extension of a descriptive concept from one entity to another, a repudiation of abstraction in principle. This philosophical move is important in several epistemological currents of contemporary fascism. In fascist thinking, the 'universal human' is an illegitimate power game of the kind Nietzsche or Carl Schmitt had identified (Andersen 2018: 86). The concept of a common humanity exemplifies a

will to power, whereas there exist only specific entities. From this position, a common humanity, indeed any universalism, can be fully jettisoned.

The fascist rejection of abstractions and the stress on the distinctiveness of groups is not an invitation to relativism. Dominique Venner, a key writer within the European New Right who committed suicide in 2017 at Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris, in protest at gay marriage, wrote:

This universalist belief is also dangerous for those of us in Europe. It stunts our ability to comprehend that other men do not feel, think, or live the same way we do. It is dangerous because it acts destructively upon our own identity. After having colonised other peoples in the name of universalism, Europeans are now in the process of being colonised in the name of the very same principle against which they do not know how to defend themselves: if all men are brothers, nothing can stop the arrival of others on our doorstep. (Venner 2015: 3)

This last idea - universal humanism means hordes at European immigration gates - is repeated often in far-right discourse and illustrates how a Nietzschean argument about epistemology translates into demotic far-right politics.

The fascist disavowal of universal abstractions includes 'the individual'. As with earlier occultist writers like René Guénon (2001), individualism is seen as a corruption of nature that arose from the reviled French Revolution and Declaration of the Rights of Man, and the American Declaration of Independence: the individual with all its rights and freedoms is a degradation of

the course of nature (Evola 2001: 135). Here, fascist philosophy faces a difficulty, the resolution to which is of great significance for its ideological racism. How can fascism reconcile the ferocious attachment to individual distinctiveness – the ‘own face’ and ‘proper nature’ of Evola’s person that makes them unique and unequal – with the vociferous rejection of the individual? Another version of the same difficulty is that if there is no legitimate universal concept, and yet we are all unique, then what concept can be used to characterise that which makes us unique, without making that concept universal?

### **Occult nature**

Fascism relies on ideologies of naturalism to provide its resolution to these difficulties it has generated. Rootedness is a powerful naturalist metaphor for the far-right. Indeed, ‘enrootment’ is the ‘motor of all historical dynamism’ (Faye 2011: 131). Fascism’s human-plant analogy invokes the tree, the sapling and the seed, as well as the land and fertile soil that nourishes the plant and in which the plant is firmly entrenched. There is no individual outside of its *enrootedness* in a particular society, culture, nation and civilization. ‘Merely being a ‘man’ is a minus compared to being a man belonging to a given nation and society’, as Evola put it (2002: 139). If enrootedness creates human distinctiveness such that there must be permanent barbed wire boundaries between differing people, then significant also is a conception of ‘spiritual morphology’ that distinguishes cultures and civilizations. Venner again:

Higher civilisations are not simply regions of the planet, they are different planets entirely...[Civilisations] all have roots that reach back into time immemorial. These roots often dig deep into the depths of pre-history itself. They rest upon specific traditions that

are passed down through the ages in ever-changing forms...These all reflect a *spiritual morphology, transmitted as much through atavism as through experience*. These features make us who we are, unlike any other. They constitute our perennial tradition, our unique way of being men and women in the face of life, death, love, history, and fate. *Without them we are fated to become nothing; to disappear into chaos, and into the chaos of a world dominated by others*.

(Venner 2015: 2, emphases added)

This Splengerian vision of organic civilization (Spengler 1991: 72-3) captures well the terror of ‘white extinction’. The linking of culture to its death is distinctive to fascism, since fascism is almost definitionally incapable of conceiving culture without imagining its extinction: culture or ‘race’ are meaningless outside of the threats to them (Krebs 2012; Faye 2016). We also have above the essential features of the metaphysical racism of the European New Right and much of the American alt right. The metaphysics owes to the overfamiliar idea of *philosophia perennis* (eternal wisdom), similar to the Hindu *sanatana dharma*, an idea that travels from Schopenhauer into Guénon and Evola, and into the contemporary far-right. Ancestral knowledge shapes the spiritual form which creates the culture. It is upon ideas like this that the European New Right’s valorisations of pagan culture depend (de Benoist 2004). The swirling language is of a hoary, viscous culture ‘as old as the world’ that imprints on the soul, a culture based on ‘an archaic instinct that survives ideologies because it possesses the longest memory’ (Krebs 2012: 26-27). Yet it rests on thin, inchoate generalities. What exactly is enrootedness other than an occult intuition that it exists? How can tradition be specific and ever-changing? What attribute differentiates cultures such that they are ‘from different planets entirely’?

This imprecision about a civilization or culture to which one is so strongly committed is there partly for strategic reasons (declaring Nazi-like white supremacy invokes other memories). But it also arises from certain fascist understandings of what culture is, and what counts for knowledge about culture. Since post-Enlightenment conceptual knowledge is anathema, fascist knowledge cannot use its disagreeable methods. In the far-right philosophy that is of interest here, knowledge is not discovered – it is *remembered*, it is *intuited* (Ferraresi 1987; Guénon 2001: 41). The *philosophia perennis* will manifest in the memory or the ‘intellectual intuition’ of the adept (Evola 1992: 13). Hence, the European New Right speaks of culture as based on ‘long memories’ (Andersen 2018: 93-4). Further, despite denials that sound more insincere with each utterance, the only desirable culture is (firmly entrenched in) white European supremacy, a ‘greatness’ that is ‘known’. Similarly, the European New Right or Generation Identity’s ‘ethnopluralism’ is a manicured euphemism for violent racial apartheid founded on white European supremacy (Willinger 2013; Generation Identity 2013). Generation Identity no more cares about African people and the future of the African continent than it regrets their colonization (Willinger 2013: 76), just as the allegedly more liberal Alain de Benoist has no authentic concern for the humanity that exists outside his ‘Indo-European’, pagan obsessions (de Benoist 2016; de Benoist 2004). Thus, European New Right writers’ claim that they oppose European colonialism is a strategic deception. Its ideologues gush banalities like ‘the wealth of the world derives from its diversity and heterogeneity’ (Krebs 2012: 26-7) precisely because ‘races’ have to be separated to avoid ‘ethnic *thanatos*’ and ‘mongrelized’ people (ibid 20, 23). Yet many contemporary European fascists continue to deploy the falsehood that their approach is for the good of the humanity that liberal modernity has otherwise impoverished (Willinger 2013: 71).

In contemporary fascism’s dystopic imagination, primordial ecological unity has been mutilated by modern life. Modernity aims to destroy human nature and its relation to nature, just as ‘man’s’



spiritual life has been usurped by meaningless materialism and the abandonment of a nourishing 'higher' culture and spiritual purpose. In parallel, American mass culture and non-Western immigration are displacing authentic cultures (Krebs 2012). By generating abstractions such as the individual, equality and democracy, modernity has 'struck man' from its embedded roots (de Benoist 2004), turned 'his' natural life into a spiritless, unheroic, degenerate existence driven by the coveting of objects in mindless consumption, the blue pill of illusory American consumerism (Andersen 2018: 6-8). Human nature is now little more than Nietzsche's 'last man' (1896:11-13), the living dead of the Zombie Apocalypse.

The fascist conception, not unlike that of Marx or Rousseau, is of the estrangement of 'man' from (its) nature. The primordial organic unity to 'man' – perhaps of the kind that Marx imagined – has been destroyed in the interests of capitalism, 'money-power', the managerial state, a fraudulent democracy. In some European New Right and Third Positionist tendencies, Marx is seen as having identified much of the problem (estrangement, alienation, capitalism, commodity fetishism). But Marx did not go far enough in identifying the 'higher spiritual purpose' from which capitalism alienates 'man' (Andersen 2018: 120), as well as what would remedy this brutal estrangement: rooted culture, nation, civilization and 'race'.

Rootedness is also linked to embodiment in contemporary fascism. In rejecting post-Enlightenment universal knowledge in favour of intuited knowledge about the particular, the body becomes an honoured site as the most particular of things one can ever 'know' (an idea originating from Schopenhauer (1969: 100)). For the far-right, the body is the most immediate manifestation and 'truth' of 'race'. As importantly, fascism intrinsically privileges the body over *logos*, and the particularity of embodiment over human generalities. The separation of

consciousness from the body is a disagreeable Christian idea. Furthermore, the body is integrally associated with one's place in a group, tribe, nation and race, such that biopolitics has to be a conscious imperative against racial degeneration (Faye 2011: 84). The Nazi 'race scientist', Hans Günther, who has re-emerged in far-right thinking today (see Andersen 2018: 45), described the significance of the link between nature, body, soul and race, while reminding us of the Aryanism that underlies this link:

Quite remote from [Indo-Europeans] lies the idea that the body, addicted to this world, is a dirty prison for a soul striving out of it towards another world...The honouring of the body as a visible expression of membership of a selected genus or race is characteristic of the Indo-Europeans. (Günther 1967: 25-26)

Presenting a theory of racial degeneration that exists virtually unchanged in many far-right writings today (Krebs 2012; Tarrant 2019), Günther, in advocating eugenics, argued that industrialization, declining Nordic birthrates, the 'admixture of blood', 'the spirit of humanity', and a 'mistaken love of mankind' was causing population degeneration in Europe and the United States, and helping those 'with inferior hereditary qualities' (Günther 1927: 185). Günther is deceptively presented by fascists today as if his concept of *humanitas* meant something beneficial (Andersen 2018: 45). Yet, his publication, *Humanitas*, was widely disseminated by the Nazis, including to each member of the Hitler Youth (Esposito 2012: 58). Günther's *humanitas* is a purely racial idea that presupposes 'the centuries long breeding of an aristocratic type of man' (Günther 1967: 49). It refers to a dignity, morality and duty specific to Indo-Europeans (Aryans), but it could not be for everyone, since groups are incommensurable in their essential nature. Here, we see names and ideas from the past emerge in today's fascism as

circumlocutions that seek to disguise the quest for a racial social and political order governed by an ancestral, racial elite – a ‘whitopia’ (Johnson 2018: 98).

### **Fascism’s ‘bioculture’**

If Günther’s work was driven by National Socialist ‘race science’, another powerful series of naturalist currents emerged during the 1920s and 1930s that firmly *rejected* Darwinism, since the latter ‘relegated’ humans among other animals and forms of life. Against Darwinism, alternative metaphysical understandings of nature were generated. Many of these currents used ideas of vitalism derived from Nietzsche (and Schopenhauer), with vitalism referring to a relentless, often directionless, drive, energy, or ‘will’ – the force of life, nature’s creativity and power. This vitalism was different from Darwinian evolutionary biology against which it was often marshalled. These naturalist-vitalist currents are alive in today’s fascism and enable a shape-shifting, malleable intellectual project that can draw promiscuously on genetics, biology, anthropology or metaphysics and move epistemic ground when required.

Characterised by contemporary fascists as ‘biocentrism’, the work of the philosopher, writer and graphologist, Ludwig Klages, someone both honoured and maligned in Nazi Germany, is important here. Klages’ metaphysical vitalism travels across the contemporary European New Right, the alt-right, explicit neo-nazis and various identitarian movements (see Pryce 2001; Southgate 2010; Hanson 2015; Andersen n.d.). His vitalist critique of logocentrism also influenced other writers, including Walter Benjamin, the Frankfurt School and Habermas (Wolin 2008; Stauth and Turner 1992). For Klages, as for Derrida after him, logocentrism characterises the mode of Western philosophy, beginning with Socrates, that was the target of his critique

(Klages n.d.). Klages' work is a rejection of conceptual, representational, 'referential' thought. For him, as for later postmodernists, the image is the real, appearance is actuality. Similarly, 'life is not "observed," but it is felt with all of our darkest powers'. Concept rather than image, however, now dominates the world, with Western philosophy 'conditioned' to work for capitalism (Klages 2013: 57).

The problems Klages claimed to identify were symptomatic of a far larger issue: 'a power from outside our cosmos has broken into the sphere of life' (Klages 2013: 42). For Klages, life is assaulted by that which denies life, whether it is Socratic reason, scientific knowledge, the categorical imperative, Christianity, the mind-body and subject-object distinction, quantification, or capitalism. Conversely, the 'phenomenal manifestation of life' (Klages 2013: 96) is the living cell, the plant, the fall of a stone, the formation of clouds, 'the firmament of the fixed stars', all of which 'richly proclaim the presence of this vital unity' that Klages called *Seele* (soul, but here meaning life), a unity which was under assault by what he called *Geist* (Spirit), the adversary of life (Klages 2013: 13). Klages' flourishes might provoke us to imagine Master Yoda, but some elements of his thinking are important for contemporary fascist thought: pagan vitalism, the primacy of image, apprehension and feeling over universal conceptual thinking, and a metaphysical war between 'life' and the life-obliterating which, in contemporary neo-nazism, metonymically stands in for the eternal battle between Aryan and Jew.

Klages' ideas about the lifeworld being colonized by the rational, technological and bureaucratic have much resonance in leftist thought. But, for contemporary fascists, the 'colonization' of authentic life by 'money-power', 'the system', everything represented by the blue pill, represents the pollution of the entire social formation – markets, states, politics, civil society, family. If the

‘system’ is an alien corruption that thwarts authentic existence, then any disruption of the system is a virtue, whether it is cryptocurrency or Steve Bannon calling for ‘deconstructing the administrative state’ (Fisher 2017) or overwhelming the media by ‘flooding the zone with shit’ (Remnick 2018). Disruption is a noble goal, since the metaphysics informing it is of a simple duality between a life-destroying system and a heroic resistance. One is not fighting on behalf of universal humanity (as liberals and leftists might be doing), but on the side of nature’s immense power and vitality – cosmic life itself.

### **The field of fascist racism**

If vitalist thought presents one field for understanding contemporary fascism, the latter also mobilises other intellectual currents to generate a phenomenological anthropology of racial existence. Consider this from ‘reluctant hater’ and neo-nazi, Greg Johnson of *Countercurrents*, one of the key figures of the US alt-right before its organizational disintegration from 2016:

A year ago, I would have placed Polynesians on the list of peoples I had nothing against. But I had no direct contact with them. Then several families from Samoa or Tonga moved in a few buildings down. I thought they were aesthetically unappealing: large, brown, Australoid-Mongoloid hybrids who easily run to flab. But they seemed pleasant enough at first. Then I started noticing certain annoying differences. For instance, although their personal hygiene does not seem problematic – though I have not gotten close enough to confirm that – in other respects, they are unspeakably filthy people. For instance, they are fond of noisily socializing and eating together outdoors. This is bad

enough, but days later, the ground is still littered not only with trash and toys, but also with discarded food. (Johnson 2016: 3)

This racism is based on a phenomenology of immediate, spontaneous hostility that naturally bursts forth upon contact. It mobilises a naturalist idea about the authenticity of the feeling of hatred that arises from sensory perception. The *instinctive* loathing of what one visually apprehends requires no further (rational, evidential, conceptual) justification. Indeed, anything other than this kind of spontaneous aversion is considered ‘ethno-masochism’ or ‘metapolitical suicide’ (Krebs 2012; Faye 2016: 75).

This naturalist racism aims to legitimize the deepest forms of animosity as a normal political form. It has important intellectual elements, including the authority of the immediate feelings that arise from the apprehension of difference, as well as the illegitimacy of conceptual thinking that might create an affiliation to another human person. Further elements are given by something that is neither strictly ‘physical anthropology’ nor in the tradition of ‘philosophical anthropology’ but uses both. Here, perceiving social and cultural (rather than ‘biological’) ‘races’ is seen as natural, inevitable, inherent. This indwelling quality that simultaneously recognises and loathes has a metaphysical status in some forms of fascist thinking: *anthropos* is a metaphysical entity that recognizes ‘race’ as central to its existence. In Alain de Benoist’s dissimulating prose, the recognition of perceived ‘races’ transmutes into ‘the right to difference’ and heterophilia.

Ultimately, the claim that the simple observation of the existence of races stems from ‘racism’ is untenable. It implies, bizarrely, that perception of races can only lead to

negative evaluations...One cannot eliminate a shared perception, even in the name of 'science,' by branding it as an 'illusion.' (de Benoist 1999: 42)

Here, de Benoist slithers from something like 'a human instinct to notice difference' to a justification for racism, while claiming to do the opposite. This turning of prejudice into a primal, 'biocultural' instinct needs further excavation, since it links directly to the far-right's abhorrence regarding 'racial pollution' and 'mixing'.

The contribution of philosophical anthropology, an intellectual current arising from the 1920s in Germany and elsewhere, to contemporary fascism is of relevance. Like the vitalist currents described earlier, philosophical anthropology asserted the distinctiveness of 'man' against developments in post-Darwinian biology. As developed by Max Scheler, what differentiated humans from nature and from other animals was 'spirit' (Levy 1985; Rehberg 2009). Arnold Gehlen was a committed National Socialist, but his contribution to philosophical anthropology presents a complex legacy for fascists who deploy his work. Gehlen used an idea from Nietzsche of the human as a 'still not determined' animal (Nietzsche 2002: 56), and Max Scheler's idea of the human as a 'world-open' creature that was not tied to a particular environment (Gehlen 1988: 15). The human is a 'deficient being', since it is unspecialized, but this 'deficiency' also means an 'undetermined', 'unfinished' nature – a general, plastic, trainable being (Gehlen 1988: 24).

While the appeal of a mouldable human for fascism is obvious (see Faye 2016: 193), of significance is another critical idea from Gehlen: humans create institutions that generate the

continuity and stability needed for biological survival. For some contemporary fascists, culture is the key institution that a biologically ‘naked’ creature is compelled to create (Andersen 2018: 93; de Benoist 1999). Here, an inextricable association between biology and culture is derived from philosophical anthropology: culture’s alleged proximity to biological survival leads to the idea of culture as a ‘second nature’. It is through this merging of culture with biology that European New Right thinkers derive ideas of culture in which racial apprehension is simply natural and instinct-driven (Andersen 2018: 93).

Yet, several sharp difficulties emerge for contemporary fascist thinking. If the human is general, adaptable, and has the capacity for a vast array of actions, why should multiculturalism or a general empathy for all of humanity not be those actions? If cultures evolve, why can they not evolve impurely? By analogy, the same fatal contradiction emerges in far-right accelerationists’ combination of biological, white supremacist racism with a concupiscent fetish for the limitless possibilities of human genetic modification.

The variety of vitalist and naturalist ideas above informs a span of racial thinking among contemporary fascists that ranges from individual, ‘instinctive’ hatred to the ‘racial’ souls of vast civilisations, and from allegedly ‘biological-genetic’ to occult understandings of ‘race’, culture and civilisation. They provide intellectual resources that assist fascism in cultivating a variety of positions, as incoherent as they are. If US alt-right racial thinking tends towards accepting the claims of pseudoscientific ‘human biodiversity’ or ‘race realism’ (Johnson 2018: 66), the European New Right’s racism glides from ‘human biodiversity’ to ‘bioculture’ to metaphysical forms of racism. Far-right ideologue, Guillaume Faye, speaks of ‘biocultural identity as the base of everything’, with culture resting on a ‘bio-anthropological substrata, its *germen*’ (2011: 35, 106,



146). This eighteenth and nineteenth century use of *germen* ('seed') means little other than an imagined metaphysical essence. But for Faye, 'race' is also genetic, manifesting as 'innate physiological and biological differences' and 'racially' distinct genetic populations (ibid: 226). Yet he can reject the idea of a 'pure race' and state that Europeans are genetically hybrid (Faye 2011: 225).

Similarly, European New Right thinkers promote the idea of a 'rooted' white European superiority that rejects cultural or 'racial' mixing, while also maintaining that all cultures change. They support a 'bioracism' that cannot commit to the actual findings ancestral human genetics or contemporary genetic biology, but nevertheless maintains a 'bio-anthropological' understanding of fixed 'races' (Krebs 2012: 82) and can shift ground to genetic or cultural racism when it suits. Some neo-nazis also make the argument that if 'race' is only socially constructed, that makes it a social fact real enough for white nationalism (Johnson 2018: 67). Yet, there is also the idea of cultures and civilizations as living entities that possess a 'soul', immaterial in form, but vital to meaningful human existence (Spengler 1991), and so must be protected (Andersen 2018: 11). Ideas of 'bioculture' also travel into the shrieking 'declaration of war against the 68ers' by Generation Identity in which it claims: 'the wish for boundaries and the pursuit of identity are *primal drives* that will always be with us' (Willinger 2013: 83). It is necessary to grasp the full demotic significance of fascist understandings of 'bioculture': fascist opposition to non-Western immigration is not based on economic or superficially cultural arguments, but on eugenic reasoning and a revulsion towards 'miscegenation' (Krebs 2012; Faye 2016; Johnson 2018). The key vitalist power, the genius of daring or *thumos* manifests most significantly in 'the white race' (Andersen 2018: 172-3), the latter in considerable danger because of 'dysgenic' trends.

If eugenic reasoning characterises today's Western far right (and indeed, much populist right thinking), it existed in virtually the same form during the 1920s and 1930s. In the work of Hans Günther and white supremacist author Lothrop Stoddard, writing in Europe and north America respectively during the 1920s, we see the same celebration of white vitalism, and the same anxieties about elite white extinction: the 'admixture of alien blood can modify or even destroy the very soul of a people' (Stoddard 1921: 254). When we encounter the supposedly human-loving 'ethnopluralism' of the European New Right or the separate homelands advocated by the US alt-right, it is worth remembering the origin of these ideas:

Immigration restriction is a species of segregation on a large scale, by which inferior stocks can be prevented from both diluting and supplanting good stocks. Just as we isolate bacterial invasions, and starve out the bacteria by limiting the area and amount of their food-supply, so *we can compel an inferior race to remain in its native habitat, where its own multiplication in a limited area will, as with all organisms, eventually limit its numbers and therefore its influence.* (Stoddard 1921: 260, emphasis added)

Stoddard feared 'the rising tide of color' against the white world, much like Trump, Bannon, the alt right and alt-lite do today. Tracts such as his conceive of whites as an international collective, such that an injury to one should be felt by whites everywhere. The power of this idea was recognised fully by Brenton Tarrant, the Christchurch killer, as it is by north American members of the white *umma* from the alt-right, the alt-lite or the counterjihad movement who are exceptionally obsessed by the catastrophe befalling 'white Europe' as a result of migration, birthrates or Muslims.

## **Fascism's nostalgia for the future**

Fascism is often seen as an ideology of civilizational decline and nationalist rebirth ('palingenetic ultranationalism', Griffin 1993). The idea of 'rebirth' provides 'hope' for the fascist imagination. But suppose 'hope' and victorious rebirth have been extinguished as possibilities by fascist metaphysics itself? I want to focus on a different set of metaphysical ideas that are about civilizational and racial decline but are also pessimistic about 'destiny'. Here, the path to 'rebirth' may not be corrigible, may indeed be impossible. These ideas signal the apocalyptic dimensions of some contemporary fascist thinking, in particular the power of cleansing violence of the kind that animated fascist terrorists from Timothy McVeigh to Anders Breivik to Brenton Tarrant.

For contemporary fascists, the world is a dystopia that will precede something like Ragnarök (the 'doom of the gods'), a metaphor for global catastrophe (Andersen 2018: 6). Ragnarök is one symbol for the apocalyptic imagination that is central to fascism. Fascist thinking today is a series of dystopic visions: the 'kali fucking yuga', Evola's 'men among the ruins', white extinction, the spiritual decay of Western civilization. Here, 'money-power' has occulted immaterial values, the personality is transient, gratified by meaningless consumption; the strong cultures and birthrates of migrants are resulting in Europeans being 'wiped out' (Johnson 2018). This fascist narrative of Western decline is an example of a recurring declinist narrative in Europe emerging from the early nineteenth-century, of which Spengler's work is a key example. The narrative of Western decline also suggests a linear path to catastrophe. This, however, does not capture the more complex metaphysics of time upon which fascism is often based.

The fascist rejection of Enlightenment knowledge is also a repudiation of linear temporality, and therefore of the optimism that accompanies narratives of progress. Of significance is Nietzsche's 'eternal recurrence', itself informed by Schopenhauer's use of Hindu and Buddhist cyclical time: the future becomes the past, just as the past is waiting for us. But eternal recurrence is not necessarily a repetition of the same; time is not a two-dimensional circle. Instead, each instance of recurrence represents a different circular path on a sphere. As with Heidegger, the origin 'bursts into our future' (de Benoist 2004: 13). This may help us see why so many of today's fascist thinkers are obsessed with medieval aristocratic feudalism. In a cyclical conception of time, aristocratic feudalism existed in the past and will do so again in the future, yet it will be informed by what has gone before it, including technological advancement. Hence, Guillaume Faye's 'archaeofuturism' that seeks to 'reconcile Evola with Marinetti' (2010: 89) or Menciús Moldbug's advocacy of 'cameralism' or 'manoralism' (2008). If the latter are past forms of anti-democratic governance, they now join with the narcissistic self-belief among some that societies are like the software and admin systems they tinker with every day.

In the 'new, traditional' society that the European New Right and other fascists desire, individuals will belong to their appropriate gender, racial and caste 'domains' through which they 'realise' themselves. The glue that would hold this social formation together and drive it forward are alliances of men, Männerbund, whose values are chivalry, honour, courage, greatness – the spiritual, aristocratic and warrior values of which Julius Evola was fond. Jack Donovan, a gay writer whose work has been avidly promoted by neo-nazi Richard Spencer, among others, promotes some of these older ideas as exemplifying the tribal 'way of men' needed today (Donovan 2012; Miller and Donovan 2012). In the fascist imagination, Männerbunds are alleged to have held societies together historically but have been emasculated by feminism, liberalism, 'money-power'. The fascist fetish for medieval societies, rendered as peaceful utopias of 'fidelity

and mutual responsibility' (Andersen 2018: 50), is not surprising, since the despised French Revolution heralded their decline. Yet, the obsession is based on an occultist natural law theory of organic, hierarchical, patriarchal society and nature's cosmic order.

It is, however, a consequence of cyclical time that all civilizations decline as their success leads to eventual 'decadence' (Andersen 2018: 13). Why should one take any action now in the face of this cosmically driven fatalism? Why should the 'men among the ruins' do anything at all? Evola, in addressing this issue, considered a small, elite group of men who might be able to join the 'regal stream' of history (Evola 1995: 366). Contemporary fascists see the current period as an interregnum between the 'dying liberal order' and a new one that is to emerge. For some fascists, there is today 'the greatest possibility of giving shape to the future than anytime in last half century'. While cyclical time engenders a natural pessimism, 'the gods do intervene': 'We need "full spectrum dominance" and synergies; we need to control not only the street, but the Internet, the parliaments as well as the academy.' (Andersen 2018: 302, 6).

In fascist metaphysics, nevertheless, whatever one does now will become meaningless in time; there is no happy, settled life. Of importance here is the fascist rendering of destiny. Action, especially heroic action, is associated with being bound to destiny. Yet this is not necessarily destiny with a purpose. This idea constitutes a significant strand in contemporary fascist metaphysics, and it can be understood as promoting a 'destiny-bound life' that cannot be tied to redemption, but nor is it fatalistic, since it is inextricably linked to the necessity of action. Günther, quoting Schopenhauer, explains that 'A happy life is impossible, the highest to which man can attain is a heroic course of life' (Günther 1967: 19). There can be no redemption, anxiety, contrition or self-damnation here, since these are 'Christian'. Instead, men 'stand

squarely' and 'stand upright' amidst the turmoil and ruins and paying homage to the certainty of destiny.

This doublet of pessimism and destiny is, I think, central to much contemporary fascism and arises from the metaphysical resources upon which it draws: the work of Evola, Ernst Jünger, Hans Günther, Klages, Nietzsche, among others. For several strands of fascist thinking, there is no possible resolution to the global crisis being witnessed. The crisis will not be resolved by migration ending, by liberalism being voted out, by any number of 'policy changes' or 'populist' figures. Destiny is about heroic action, yet it has no guarantee other than that action. There is therefore also despair and lament as a metaphysical angst of the kind that one needs to turn to Kierkegaard to grasp fully. In this sense, fascism is a response to an existentialism that it has consciously created, one which ultimately views individual 'racial' existence as tormented and purposeless. If there is a scream of individuality, which therefore demands individualism, this is hopeless for reasons we have already seen. There is no future redemption, since the path to the future is not linear and is ultimately without any meaning other than the meaning one places upon destiny. One resolution is to commit to a belief to which one does not fully subscribe, such as traditionalism or paganism. Stepping out of existing sociality is another, much like Jünger's figure of the Anarch that is in but not of the social in which it finds itself. But the most significant resolution is cleansing apocalyptic violence, a consequence of the metaphysical racism that underlies fascism.

## **Conclusion**

Contemporary fascism represents political ideologies that fear ‘white extinction’ and celebrate ‘racial separation’ and natural (‘racial’, sex) inequality. Any ideology of organic inequality cannot but be animated by a metaphysics of violence against those who are considered unequal. The long-cultivated political ideology of ‘race war’ thus becomes an imperative. Hence, the grotesque violence of ‘Knights Justiciar’ Breivik, Brenton Tarrant, Dylann Roof (of the 2015 killings of African-American churchgoers in Charleston) and Darren Osborne (of the 2017 van attack on worshippers at Finsbury Park mosque, north London), with each signalling ‘vengeance’ and a mode of violence that seeks to polarize populations. Fascist violence today is not typically directed against the state or institutions but against people in civil society. Tarrant’s belief was that his terrorism would ignite a greater violence against racial minorities to reverse ‘The Great Replacement’. Yet, significant parts of his ‘manifesto’ suggest the impossibility of such an outcome, since allegedly high birthrates are a global phenomenon. The overwhelming theme is despair about ‘white extinction’ and the imperative to remove migrants from Europe by violent force, including the mass murder of migrant children. The racist and fascist obsession with migrant birthrates has a long pedigree that projects a familiar sexual anxiety:

‘All through immigration. This is ethnic replacement. This is cultural replacement. This is racial replacement. This is WHITE GENOCIDE.’ (Tarrant 2019)

Tarrant’s document, like those of Dylann Roof and others, are demotic condensations of the metaphysics examined above. The racism in today’s fascism is violent, absurd and intellectually driven, willingly embracing a post-truth universe, yet making definite claims about infallible knowledge. A 4chan meme may enfold occult, Nazi-like antisemitic ideas with anti-black hatred and ideas derived from ‘human biodiversity’. Yet, within this mire, there are distinct thematic and

intellectual currents. Their deployment is not systematic but promiscuous. Contemporary fascism deploys ideas of naturalism, political misogyny, vitalism, hierarchy and racial order. Elements of philosophical anthropology merge with vitalist, naturalist currents to provide a different epistemology of 'race' and racism. Though it readily mobilizes 'racial types', the new epistemology of 'race' is not strictly based on 'type' and 'typology' (Banton 1979). Indeed, it can even be 'anti-type' since it rejects abstractions. Primarily, its energy comes from mobilizing ideas of 'bioculture', 'cultural specificity', 'spirit'. Its starting point is the phenomenology of instinctual 'racial' antagonism. Here, the 'folk anthropology' about the natural apprehension of 'racial' difference is a deception that masks plain racist hatred. This 'racial' feeling emerges from those who are deemed to be the legitimate inheritors of the land. Yet, if 'land' and 'plant' are key motifs in contemporary fascism, the inheritance of the soil does not necessarily belong to autochthons or the indigenous in any consistent way. Contemporary fascism, in having to reckon with the monumental churn of human genetic history and its consequence that no planetary land has ever 'belonged' to any distinctive group of humans in meaningful continuity (Reich 2018), turns to occult ideas of greatness, tradition and genius to make claims about territory. Europe is legitimately the land of white Europeans, but so is Australia, the United States or South Africa since white 'genius' – 'genius' being a racial imprint on the soul – has made those its own. Since contemporary fascism can shift epistemic ground rapidly, and since it is committed to philosophies in which dissimulation and hatred are legitimate consequences of nature's order, it is formidable for those reasons alone.

The political languages of contemporary fascism stand in a symbiotic relationship to the political environment in which they have thrived. They have been as much produced by contemporary racist and xenophobic political culture in Euro-America as they have influenced it. There is a shared universe of meaning between much mainstream political discourse and contemporary



white nationalism. The ‘fear of white extinction’, and related ideas of population eugenics, have travelled far and represent a wider political anxiety about ‘white displacement’ in the US, UK and Europe that has fuelled the right-wing phenomena referred to by that sanitizing word ‘populism’, a term that neatly evades attention to the racism and white majoritarianism that energizes it. Trump’s ‘populist’ racism was able to articulate in a seamless way the ideological positions of both US neo-nazis and the international counter-jihad movement. If multiculturalism is described as the destruction of Western civilization, or characterized as a cosmopolitan elite pastime that betrays the real interests of the indigenous working class, if migrants are depicted as an invading foe, or concern about ‘racial’ birthrates or whites as an international collective animates political discourse, as with Trump’s rhetoric about ‘white genocide’ in South Africa (de Greef and Karasz 2018), the political landscape has already embraced fascism.

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