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JEREMIAH MORELOCK

CRITICAL THEORY AND AUTHORITARIAN POPULISM

Critical Theory and Authoritarian Populism

edited by Jeremiah Morelock

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Preface to Critical Theory and Authoritarian Populism

Douglas Kellner

Since the Brexit referendum in U.K., the election of Donald Trump in the 2016 U.S. election, and the rise of right-wing populist movements throughout the globe, there has been intense focus on authoritarian populism on a global scale. The articles collected in this volume carry out a Frankfurt School critique of authoritarian populism, dealing with Trump, various right-wing populist movements in Europe, Latin America, and throughout the globe. The contributors make use of classic Frankfurt School Critical Theory to address contemporary populism and especially its authoritarian varieties as an important phenomenon and threat in the contemporary moment, using key ideas and theorists of the Frankfurt School to interpret and provide a critique of Trump and the Trump phenomenon, as well as authoritarianism in its varied contemporary forms.

In 1950, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno helped to assemble a volume titled *The Authoritarian Personality*, which constructed a psychological and sociological profile of the '*potentially fascistic individual*' (Adorno et al. 1950). The work was based on interviews largely with American workers, and the cumulative racist, antidemocratic, paranoid, and irrational sentiments in the case studies suggested that there were dangers of fascism in the United States, and since that day there have been many studies of authoritarianism in U.S. politics, a study intensified in the contemporary era of authoritarian populism.

Around the same period as *The Authoritarian Personality*, Leo Löwenthal and Norbert Guterman published in 1949 *Prophets of Deceit*, which studied Father Coughlin and other rabble-rousers of the era, envisaging the 'possibility that a situation will arise in which large numbers of people would be susceptible to his

psychological manipulation,' thus anticipating a Prophet of Deceit and conman like Donald Trump!

As I note below in my study of Erich Fromm in this volume, Trump has neither the well-articulated party apparatus, nor the full-blown ideology of the Nazis, and thus more resembles the phenomena of **authoritarian populism** or **neofascism**, which we can use to explain Trump and his supporters.

Contributors to this volume use a variety of Frankfurt School theorists, texts, and ideas to illuminate Trump and authoritarian populism. They engage authoritarian populism on a global scale in various ways, as the Editor indicates in the Introduction. The studies collected demonstrate the continued relevance of Frankfurt School Critical Theory to critically engage key phenomena of the present moment, as well as the dangers inherent in Trump and other authoritarian populist movements – dangers the members of the Frankfurt school in exile from Hitler's Germany were all too familiar with in the light of their experiences of German fascism.

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Introduction

Jeremiah Morelock

> In view of everything that is engulfing Europe and perhaps the whole world, our present work is of course destined to be passed on through the night that is approaching: a kind of message in a bottle.

> — Horkheimer, 1940[1]

One of the most famous messages from the Institute for Social Research is that liberal-democratic societies tend to move toward fascism. With the recent surge of far-Right populism throughout the West,[2] this Frankfurt School warning reveals its prescience. But there is much more than this. A wealth of insights pertinent to authoritarian and populist trends is contained in their writings. In view of everything that is engulfing Europe, the United States, and perhaps the whole world, the work of the early Frankfurt School demands concerted revisiting. Such is the purpose of the present volume. Before providing an outline of its contents, I will briefly define 'Critical Theory' and 'authoritarian populism' as they are used here, and then provide a rough chronology of the early Frankfurt School, focusing on their writings about authoritarianism, prejudice and populism.[3]

1. Definition of Critical Theory and Authoritarian Populism

Early articulations of Critical Theory can be found in Horkheimer's 1937 'Traditional and Critical Theory' and Marcuse's 1937 'Philosophy and Critical Theory.'[4] Horkheimer identified Critical Theory with several purposes, including interdisciplinary scholarship, intercourse between theory and empirical research, and exposition/overturning of domination. Marcuse described Critical Theory as a movement of philosophy away from rationalism/idealism, toward the practical development of a utopian, post-capitalist world. He said Critical Theory always points beyond present facts, locating them in historical context, between past conditions and future possibilities. Later on, Adorno equated Critical Theory with his own project of 'negative dialectics,' digging beneath the surface of received truths to show their immanent contradictions (Adorno 1966, 2014). Suffice it to say here that in the present volume the meaning of 'Critical Theory' is circumscribed to the work of the 'Horkheimer Circle' and their colleagues, the first generation of the *Institut für Sozialforschung* (IfS).

The term 'authoritarian populism' goes back to Stuart Hall's work on British Thatcherism in the late 1970s.[5] Our use of the term here is consonant with his, although it may be overstating to say we 'adhere' to it. While Critical Theory on authoritarianism, prejudice and populism focused mostly on Nazism, 'authoritarian populism' has broad meaning.[6] In the pages that follow, to be 'authoritarian' is to seek social homogeneity through coercion. 'Populism' is defining a section of the population as truly and rightfully 'the people' and aligning with this section against a different group identified as elites. Together, 'authoritarian populism' refers to the pitting of 'the people' against 'elites' in order to have the power to drive out, wipe out, or otherwise dominate Others who are not 'the people.' Generally, this involves social movements fuelled by prejudice and led by charismatic leaders that seek to increase governmental force to combat difference. It is commonplace for governments under the direction of authoritarian populists to condense and centralize authority, so that more power rests in the hands of fewer people.

2. Historical Outline of Critical Theory on Authoritarianism, Prejudice and Populism

In 1918, Germany erupted in revolution, the year after Lenin's Bolsheviks successfully instituted – nominally, at least – a dictatorship of the proletariat. For a brief period, it was possible that the German revolution could have a similar result. Yet the outcome in 1919 was a wide compromise spearheaded by the Social Democratic Party (SPD): the Weimar Republic. Five years later, the Institute for Social Research was formed, as a locus for the study of socialism and

workers' movements from a Marxist perspective, under the directorship of Carl Grünberg.

2.1. Early Writings

In 1925, Reich, a young associate of Freud, published a book on the 'impulsive character,' building from Freud (1908), Jones (1918) and Abraham's (1923) theory of the 'anal character.' The book was widely regarded and influential (Sharaf 1983; Boadella 1973). Starting here, Reich worked toward a broader character typology, eventually forming an entire approach to psychoanalysis.

In the late 1920s, Fromm – a colleague of Reich's developing a separate character typology (Fromm 1932) – launched the first large empirical research project of the Frankfurt School. In the survey data collected from German workers, Fromm predicted that respondents' explicit political leanings would match their larger – and somewhat unconscious – character structures (Fromm 1984; Thomson 2009). The empirical investigation of espoused values vis-à-vis underlying character remained a major theme in the Institute's future studies of anti-Semitism.

In the early 1930s, IfS's new director Horkheimer steered the Institute toward interdisciplinary collaboration (including psychoanalysis) and combining theoretical and empirical investigation. Also, at this time, Walter Benjamin produced 'Theories of German Fascism' (1930/1979), the first published work of the Frankfurt School explicitly on fascism. It was a scathing review essay on German nationalist writings. Benjamin derided Nazism's romantic mythologizing of war. 'Until Germany has broken through the entanglement of such Medusa-like beliefs that confront it in these essays, it cannot hope for a future […] If this corrective effort fails, millions of human bodies will indeed inevitably be chopped to pieces and chewed up by iron and gas' (Benjamin 1930, 128).

Three years later, in January, 1933, Hitler became Chancellor of Germany. The Institute relocated, eventually to Columbia University. The group became less focused on why the German communist revolution failed, and more centred on Nazism and why it prevailed. Also in 1933, Reich published *Character Analysis* and *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*. In *Character Analysis*, Reich outlined several character types, locating their origins in how they were parented (Reich 1949/1980). One of these types, 'the masochistic character,' would soon be reflected in Fromm's 'sadomasochistic character,' which would remain central throughout Fromm and Adorno's work on authoritarianism. In *Mass Psychology* Reich merged Marx and Freud to create a comprehensive theory of character, social structure, and sexuality. The Marx-Freud combination was novel at the time, and it profoundly influenced IfS.[7]

Reich introduced the concept of 'the authoritarian family' as 'the foremost and most essential source of reproduction of every kind of reactionary thinking'

(Reich 1946/2007, 60). He noted the authoritarian family was patriarchal and most prevalent in the lower-middle class. Reich lucidly describes the relationship the patriarchal family to the economy and to the socialization of characters amenable to fascism:

> In the figure of the father the authoritarian state has its representative in every family […] [T]he father holds the same position that his boss holds toward him in the production process. And he reproduces his subservient attitude toward authority in his children, particularly his sons […] [T]he sons, apart from a subservient attitude toward authority, develop a strong identification with the father, which forms the basis of the emotional identification with every kind of authority. (53–54)

Marcuse's 1934 *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (the Institute's journal) article 'Der Kampf gegen den Liberalismus in der totalitaren Staatsuaffassung'[8] critiqued Nazi political existentialism, as embodied in Carl Schmitt's writings. Echoing Benjamin's earlier articulation of fascism's romanticisation of war, Marcuse explained German totalitarian thought arose from a heroic-vitalist and irrationalist reaction against the sterile rationality of modern life. Nazism framed the fascist state as beyond rational or moral criticism; instead it was claimed as self-justifying, a direct, authentic relation between ruler and ruled. This meant decisionism at the top: rulers did not need to justify their actions or adhere to established guidelines. Marcuse argued fascism was a stage in capitalist development, rather than a break from it. Neumann and Kirchheimer provided similar assessments in following years.

In 1936, Horkheimer's 'Egoism and Freedom Movements: On the Anthropology of the Bourgeois Era' was published in the *Zeitschrift*. Horkheimer's method of 'anthropology' was first given concrete implementation here. It became a mainstay of Critical Theory in years to come (Abromeit 2011), influencing a variety of publications (see Jay 1982) including Adorno et al.'s *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950). Horkheimer envisioned a focus on the psychologies prevalent among particular groups in specific political-economic times and places. In 'Egoism and Freedom Movements,' Horkheimer articulated trends of populist leaders who 'portrayed themselves as champions of the "people"' but 'once the leaders had come to power, they began to oppress the masses, thereby revealing their own true character and the dominant tendencies within the movement as a whole' (Abromeit 2011, 270). Here Horkheimer also discussed the oratorical techniques of authoritarian demagogues. The analysis or authoritarian populists' public speech also continued in future publications, including Löwenthal and Guterman's *Prophets of Deceit* (1949).

As mentioned above, Reich influenced Fromm's theory of the authoritarian character. Fromm's character typology developed as he analysed the data from Weimar workers. Here Fromm distinguished three main 'syndromes' or personality types: 1) *authoritarian*, 2) *radical (revolutionary)*, and 3) *ambivalent*.

The revolutionary valued equality, peace and tolerance, while the authoritarian opposed them. The ambivalent could not fit clearly as authoritarian or revolutionary. 15% of respondents were revolutionary, congruent in political leanings and character structures. 10% were authoritarian, congruent in politics and character. 75% were ambivalent. A number of the ambivalent espoused leftist politics but exhibited authoritarian tendencies. Fromm hypothesized members of the ambivalent group may be emotionally susceptible to Nazi propaganda, regardless the political beliefs they reported (Fromm 1984; Thomson 2009).

Fromm's characterology was similar to Reich's, but without the centrality of sexuality and its repression. Though then unpublished,[9] Fromm's research project on German workers informed *Studien über Autorität und Familie*, the collaborative IfS work-in-progress published in 1936. The collaboration was also informed by Horkheimer's 'anthropology.' In Fromm's contribution to the *Studien*, he criticized Freud for ignoring social conditions – which change throughout history – on people's psychological relationship to authority. Fromm attributed authoritarian tendencies to a sadomasochistic character, which he claimed would be more common in more hierarchical societies. Also in the *Studien*[10] was an essay by Horkheimer where he pointed to the progressive transfer of the family's socialization function along with the patriarchal father's authority to extra-familial institutions. Horkheimer's family theory was similar to Reich's in the function identified with the patriarchal family – connecting political and economic structures with socialization. Yet unlike Reich, Horkheimer exhibited ambivalence toward the traditional bourgeois family. While its decline was liberating in ways, the family was also mediator between the individual and an increasingly rationalized capitalist society (Jay 1973).[11]

In 1934 Löwenthal completed an essay called 'Toward a Psychology of Authoritarianism' for the *Studien*, but it was not included. It is reproduced in *False Prophets*, a collection of his works on authoritarianism (Löwenthal 1987). During the 1930s Löwenthal published several articles tying literature to fascism.[12] Others articulated relations between fascism and art. Adorno connected Wagner's aesthetics and Nazism in his 1938[13] work *In Search of Wagner* (1952/2009).[14] In 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' – written in 1935 and revised in 1939 – Benjamin declared: '*The logical outcome of fascism is an aestheticizing of political life*' (Benjamin 2008, 41). Humanity's '*self-alienation has reached a point where it can experience its own annihilation as a supreme aesthetic pleasure. Such is the aestheticizing of politics, as practiced by fascism*' (42). In the late 1930s, Adorno and Lazarsfeld participated in the 'Radio Research Project' investigating how popular radio impacts society. Adorno analysed rhetorical strategies used by far-right radio personality Martin Luther Thomas in radio addresses from 1935. He wrote up the results (Adorno 2000) in 1943, two years after he left the Project. The monograph was published posthumously,[15] but a short 1946 article by Adorno called 'Antisemitism and Fascist Propaganda,' largely distilled the main takeaways from the Thomas study.

Similar themes as in the theoretical *Studien* essays were in Fromm's 1941 *Escape from Freedom*.[16] Here Fromm tied Nazism to growing alienation under late capitalism. Fromm theorized freedom and security together in a kind of existential rivalry. Emerging from the 'primary bonds' of family, the child progressively acquires greater independence and loses security. Newfound freedom can create anxiety, and the child may respond through attempting to retreat back into the security of primary bonds. Emerging from the security of traditional society, people are less tied to families and communities of origin, and have to decide what to do with that freedom. Fromm identified four significant 'mechanisms of escape': domination, submission, destructiveness, and 'automaton conformity'. Desires for domination and submission tend to coincide as sadomasochism, which typifies the authoritarian character.[17] Destructiveness tends to overlap with authoritarianism. Conformity increases anxiety and primes people for masochistic submission, and thus for a *Führer*.

2.2. *Theories of the Nazi State*

The IfS also analysed the Nazi state. The major pivot of this discussion was Pollock's theory of 'state capitalism' (which I explain below). The Frankfurt School was split on the state capitalism theory; Horkheimer and Pollock on one side and Neumann, Kirchheimer and Gurland on the other. The debate flourished in 1941, but articles in prior years led up to it. Concurring with Marcuse's 1934 description of the Nazi state as a continuation of late capitalism with decisionism at the top, was Neumann in his 1937 *Zeitschrift* article 'Der Funktionswandel des Gesetzes im Recht der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft.' Nazi law was a farce. Decisionist rule on top of monopoly capital was the *modus operandi* of the Nazi state. In the final chapter to *Punishment and Social Structure* (Rusche and Kirchheimer 1939) and in his article 'Criminal Law in National-Socialist Germany' (1939) Kirchheimer provided an assessment of Nazi law consonant with Neumann's.

Pollock's theory of state capitalism departed from the more orthodox Marxist perspectives of Neumann and Kirchheimer. He provided the germ of his theory in articles for the *Zeitschrift* in the early 1930s, but his mature statement appeared in 'State Capitalism: Its Possibilities and Limitations' (1941), and the first article in *Zeitschrift* IX(2) (by then renamed *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*). Pollock identified a growing trend: advanced industrial societies were converging in basic structure, toward a durable state-controlled market.[18] States might be authoritarian or democratic, yet the 'primacy of the political' – the 'power motive' over the 'profit motive' – was increasingly ubiquitous. Under this category he subsumed Nazism, Soviet communism, and the New Deal.[19]

Studies in Philosophy and Social Science (SPSS) IX(2), where Pollock's 'State Capitalism' article appeared, was a special issue on authoritarianism. Following

Horkheimer's preface and the aforementioned Pollock article was 'Technological Trends and Economic Structure under National Socialism' by Gurland, who – like Neumann and Kirchheimer and in contrast to Pollock – claimed that Hitler's Germany was still monopoly capitalism. The remaining articles were Kirchheimer's 'Changes in the Structure of Political Compromise,' Horkheimer's 'Art and Mass Culture' and Adorno's 'Spengler Today.'[20] IX(3), the following – and final – issue of *SPSS*, largely continued the theme of IX(2). Here appeared Horkheimer's 'The End of Reason,'[21] Adorno's 'Veblen's Attack on Culture,' Marcuse's 'Some Social Implications of Modern Technology,' Pollock's 'Is State Capitalism a New Order?' and Kirchheimer's 'The Legal Order of National Socialism.'

Neumann (1944) provided the most outspoken argument against Pollock's theory in his 1942 *Behemoth*,[22] a meticulous empirical and analytical study of the Nazi state. In contrast to Pollock, Neumann showed monopoly capital was very much operative in Nazi Germany, and the class structure – far from being eradicated – sharpened. The material contradictions of capitalism remained, along with the vulnerability to crisis and collapse. Neumann denied Pollock's 'new order' claim, and instead of 'state capitalism' offered the term 'totalitarian monopoly capitalism.' The Nazi state stripped the institutional machinery that mediated between individuals and state power. Domination was increasingly direct, stark, and even lawless.

2.2.1. Working for the OSS in World War II

The same year *Behemoth* and *SPSS* IX(3) came out, Neumann went to work for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) – a precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) – in the U.S. government. *Behemoth* had gained him recognition; due to its merits he was assigned to a series of senior positions. In 1943 he was appointed deputy chief of the Central European Section of the Research and Analysis Branch (R&A); the former having the responsibility of analysing Hitler's Germany, the latter being a massive collection of intellectual workers created to help defeat the Nazis in World War II. Marcuse, following his 1941 *Reason and Revolution*,[23] also left the Institute to work for the U.S. government, in the Office of War Information (OWI). In 1943 he joined the Central European Section of R&A at OSS. Kirchheimer joined in 1944. Löwenthal, Gurland and Pollock also sometimes worked for U.S. government during this time period. At R&A, Neumann, Marcuse and Kirchheimer created a series of reports on Nazi Germany. Following WWII, the OSS was disbanded by President Truman. Neumann had already resigned in favour of an academic career, but Marcuse and Kirchheimer followed R&A to its new housing in the State Department. In 1946, under mounting anti-communist pressures, R&A was disbanded.[24]

2.3. *Continuing Potential for Authoritarianism*

'[F]ascism' is only the organized political expression of the structure of the average man's character, a structure that is confined neither to certain races or nations nor to certain parties, but is general and international. Viewed with respect to man's character, *'fascism' is the basic emotional attitude of the suppressed man of our authoritarian machine civilization and its mechanistic-mystical conception of life.*

—Reich, 1942[25]

With Hitler's defeat in World War II, the immediate threat of the Nazi state ceased to be the primary focal point for the Institute's work on authoritarianism. Instead, the Frankfurt School focused on the continuing threat of fascism, due to the tendency of advanced industrial societies – whether ostensibly 'capitalist' or 'communist' – to become authoritarian. In the 1940s Reich developed related theories of the 'little man' and the 'emotional plague.' The 'little man' was somewhat akin to Fromm's sadomasochistic character: 'Fascist mentality is the mentality of the 'little man,' who is enslaved and craves authority and is at the same time rebellious' (Reich 1946/2007, xv). Yet the syndrome Reich pointed to was much more generalized than Fromm's authoritarian sadomasochist. Fromm's sadomasochist was just one character among a typology of possibilities, echoing Reich's earlier methodology. By contrast, Reich's 'little man' was a universal type, existing in everyone to some degree (although more pronounced in some people), embodying pettiness, anxiety, vindictiveness, selfishness, self-hatred, and conformism. Little men in high social positions are 'little big men,' who little men want to follow or become. Little men will also follow 'great men,' but they cannot follow truly great teachings appropriately. 'For centuries great, brave, lonely men have been telling you what to do. Time and again you have corrupted, diminished, and demolished their teachings; time and again you have been captivated by their weakest points, taken not the great truth but some trifling error as your guiding principle' (64–65).

   The little man is responsible for authoritarianism, and consequently, to end authoritarianism the little man must be overcome. This is no simple matter, however, because the little man is the result and expression of 'the emotional plague,' a deeply rooted physical-psycho-social condition particularly resistant to intervention. The emotional plague is in essence a fear of life's fullness within oneself. The response is hiding one's fullest, truest self from oneself, manifesting most immediately in a physical 'armoring' that prevents the free flow of life's energies. Yet emotional plague sufferers maintain an underground desire to free their bottled-up energies. 'Basically, therefore, *the individual afflicted with the emotional plague is characterized by the contradiction between an intense desire for life and the inability (because of the armor) to achieve a corresponding fulfillment of life.* To the careful observer, Europe's political irrationalism was clearly characterized by this contradiction' (Reich 1945).[26]

Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947/2002)[27] is also very broad in scope and concerns the continuing potential for fascism. It displays influence from Pollock's state capitalism thesis, but departs from the political-economic approach that Pollock and more orthodox Marxist members of IfS retained. Horkheimer and Adorno focus more on the rationalization of society (Jay 1973). Instead of class domination, they discuss domination over nature: both inward nature – our nonrational aspects – and outward nature – the environment (Wiggershaus 1995). Desire to dominate nature is central to Enlightenment. Scientific reason aims at control. In our quest to dominate nature through reason, we inevitably turn that quest on ourselves (Jay 1973). Enlightenment inherently contains authoritarian tendencies and the potentiality for fascism.

Enlightenment's dialectic with myth plays out over history. Myth is Enlightenment's origin, and already contains elements of Enlightenment. Domination of nature is progressively attained, yet paid for in renunciations. Controlling outward nature requires self-renunciation. We subject ourselves to instrumental rationality. Just as myth contains and leads to Enlightenment, Enlightenment contains elements of myth and reverts back into it. Unquestioning belief in scientific reason is a form of mythology, where science and rationality are believed superhuman and fit to rule society. We believe modernity progressively improves, and that, one day, society may reach 'perfection,' or utopia. We believe it is our right – perhaps even our purpose – to dominate nature, whose objects are inferior, external to us and without moral weight, rightfully at our disposal. Despite honouring reason and the myth of its forward trajectory, our conceptual thought is shrunk and closed down, eclipsed by the spread of pure calculation (Jay 1973).

Modernity deadens, dominates and confines us within impersonal social structures. As Horkheimer (1947, 160) describes: 'The hypnotic spell that such counterfeit supermen as Hitler have exercised derives not so much from what they think or say or do as from their antics, which set a style of behaviour for men who, stripped of their spontaneity by the industrial processing, need to be told how to make friends and influence people.' We accept our deadening as necessary and mythologize it as a moral good. Art, absorbed into mass culture, becomes hollow and impersonal. 'Today works of art, suitably packaged like political slogans, are pressed on a reluctant public at reduced prices by the culture industry; they are opened up for popular enjoyment like parks […] The abolition of educational privilege by disposing of culture at bargain prices does not admit the masses to the preserves from which they were formerly excluded but, under the existing social conditions, contributes to the decay of education and the progress of barbaric incoherence' (Horkheimer and Adorno 1947/2002, 130). We are neutralized, without independent thought or will to resist. Even radical intellectuals are compromised: 'Ambition aims solely at expertise in the accepted stock-in-trade, hitting on the correct slogan […] Stalin only needs to clear his throat and they throw Kafka and Van Gogh on the rubbish-heap' (Adorno 1951, 207).

New technologies facilitate saturation of life with mass media. 'In the total assimilation of culture products into the commodity sphere radio makes no attempt to purvey its products as commodities. In America it levies no duty from the public. It thereby takes on the deceptive form of a disinterested, impartial authority, which fits fascism like a glove' (129). Hardened, conformist, apathetic and pacified, we are primed for authoritarianism. Total administration continues the logical progression (Kellner 1989). 'In fascism the radio becomes the universal mouthpiece of the *Führer*; in the loudspeakers on the street his voice merges with the howl of sirens proclaiming panic, from which modern propaganda is hard to distinguish in any case' (Horkheimer and Adorno 1947/2002, 129).

Reaction against modernity is also tempted toward fascism. The wish to overcome modern alienation and anxiety can lead to authoritarianism, fascist mythologies awaiting the demoralized. Devotion to demagogues, the imagination of organic ethnic superiority and unity, narratives about reclaiming a lost golden age, the rightful ascension to global rule, and so on, may all offer cognitive palliatives. We have only to transpose our myths about superiority over nature and our dominating, instrumental relations toward it onto a segment of humanity to readily accept their genocide. For Nazism, it was the Jews.

Jews were blamed on both sides: vilified and envied as the threat of unrepressed nature against superior, self-renouncing modern people; blamed for levelling tradition, furthering scientific reason and bureaucratic capitalism. '[T]he dilemma of the Jew was that he was identified both with the Enlightenment and with its opposite' (Jay 1973, 233).[28] Psychic problems of Enlightenment the basis of Nazi anti-Semitism, Hitler's defeat only removed one manifestation, symptomatic of pervasive underlying transnational conditions.

2.4. Empirical Work, 1944–1951

In 1944, IfS conducted a large study of American workers' anti-Semitism. They obtained hundreds of interviews from industrial workers in different cities. In 1945, a huge report called *Anti-Semitism Among American Labor*, in four volumes and close to 1,500 pages, was written by Pollock, Löwenthal, Gurland and Massing. They found evidence of an alarmingly high rate of anti-Semitism: close to 70% of interviewees, 30.8% of these classified as 'actively hostile to Jews' (Wiggershaus 1995). It was never published in full, but recently a new analysis from archival materials of this 'Project on Anti-Semitism and Labor' was published (Worrell 2008). Löwenthal's 'Images of Prejudice: Anti-Semitism among U.S. Workers during World War II,' a part of the original report, was included – with his 1945 article 'Terror's Dehumanizing Effects,' on reports from concentration camp survivors – in *False Prophets* (Löwenthal 1987).

2.4.1. Studies in Prejudice

In 1949 and 1950, supported by the American Jewish Community and the Jewish Labor Committee, Max Horkheimer (with Samuel H. Flowerman – not part of IfS) edited a book series on *Studies in Prejudice*. The series consisted of five volumes, including two seminal works by IfS members: *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al. 1950) and *Prophets of Deceit* (Löwenthal and Guterman 1949).

The Authoritarian Personality is the most well-known and influential volume in the series. Unabridged it is close to 1,000 pages. The basic premise of the book owes a great debt to Fromm's theory of the authoritarian/sadomasochistic character articulated in the *Studien* (and thus also to Reich), and the overall approach also channelled the *Studien*. As Jay (1973, 241) describes it, 'the basic assumption was the existence of different personality levels, both manifest and latent. The goal of the project was the exposure of the underlying psychological dynamics corresponding to the surface expression of a prejudiced ideology or indicating a potential for its adoption.' Other elements were highly influenced if not simply inherited from the *Studien*, including some study participants and some questions they were asked. Data for *The Authoritarian Personality* was gathered through 2,099 surveys administered from 1945 to 1946, and subsequent interviews and projective tests with eighty high or low scorers. The surveys contained four scales: anti-Semitism, ethnocentrism, political and economic conservatism, and fascism (the 'F-scale'). The researchers identified nine variables associated with authoritarianism (see Rensmann, this volume).

They devised a typology of eleven 'syndromes' of amounts and configurations of the nine variables. It was bifurcated into high vis-à-vis low scorers. The '"authoritarian" syndrome' (361) had the highest potential to authoritarianism, likened to Fromm's 'sadomasochistic character.' The '"manipulative" type' – another high scorer – was 'potentially the most dangerous' (369). Rather than emotionally driven to domination and destructiveness, this type was instrumental reason, all the way down, reflecting the numbness and dehumanization described in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. This type would not turn into a passionate and committed fascist, but would readily accept genocidal practices that appear effective for given purposes.

They denoted 'pseudo-conservatism' as 'most expressive of the personality trends which the F-scale measures' (194). Unlike the 'genuine conservative' who is in politics and personality aligned with following and preserving tradition, the pseudo-conservatives's professed values are disconnected from underlying motivations. Pseudo-conservatives use conservative beliefs as rationalizations. They pass as conservative, using it as cover for underlying aggressive and destructive proclivities (Adorno et al. 1950/1982, 50; Wiggershaus 1995). Conservatism is not the only mask for authoritarianism; liberal politics work too.

Members of syndrome type '"rigid" low scorers,' are 'definitely disposed towards totalitarianism in their thinking; what is accidental up to a certain degree is the particular brand of ideological world formula that they chance to come into contact with' (Adorno et al. 1950/1982, 374).[29]

Adorno et al. trace the authoritarian personality back to the influence of childhood socialization. Strict, rigid parents with ossified values unaligned with children's lived experience promote passive obedience, and suppression and displacement of anger. The focus on the authoritarian family is reminiscent of Reich's *Mass Psychology*. As Jay (1973) points out, the patriarchal family may have become increasingly authoritarian as its function as mediator between child and society declined. The authoritarian family might be partly symptomatic of the obsoleting of the patriarchal family Horkheimer described in the *Studien*.[30] Wiggershaus further underscores Adorno et al. do not limit the authoritarian personality to Nazism, anti-Semitism or any particular historically-bound manifestation. To Adorno et al., anti-Semitism 'was part of a general attitude affecting not just Jews, and even just minorities in general, but rather mankind as a whole, history, society, and nature' (Wiggershaus 1995, 415). The authoritarian personality was more an 'anthropological' type, in the tradition of Horkheimer's 1936 'Egoism and Freedom Movements.'

In *Prophets of Deceit*, Löwenthal and Guterman present their content analysis of radio addresses, pamphlets and newspapers from thirteen public figures who had 'professed sympathy for European totalitarianism or avowed anti-Semitism' (Löwenthal 1987, 155). They offered a psychoanalytic interpretation, decoding various rhetorical strategies. Adorno (1991) synopsizes their findings with his own similar work in his 1951 'Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda.'

2.4.2. Group Experiment

Also in 1950, Horkheimer, Adorno and Pollock returned to Frankfurt with the IfS. In winter 1950–1951, IfS members studied German attitudes on the Nazi demise and Allied occupation. They called the study 'group experiment' (Pollock et al. 2011). Led by Pollock, they arranged 137 discussion groups of generally eight to sixteen, to meet in public and discuss the recent past. To motivate discussion, they were read a phony letter allegedly by 'Sergeant Colburn' of the Allied occupation. The discussions were recorded. Typical with empirical IfS studies, they amassed much data: transcribed, almost 6,400 pages. Their results included prevalence of defensiveness and 'antidemocratic' attitudes, and scarcity of guilt or accepted responsibility. In 'Guilt and Defense' – Adorno's report on the qualitative analysis of discussion transcripts – Adorno (2010, 139) bleakly surmised 'the receptiveness to totalitarian systems was built into the psychology of the individual through sociological, technological, and economic developmental tendencies and continues to exist to today.'

2.5. The 1960s, the New Left, and the University

2.5.1. Marxism contra Stalinism

In February 1956, Khrushchev gave his speech 'On the Cult of Personality and its Consequences,' reporting on Stalin's abuses of power and heatedly criticizing his late 1930s purges. Then in spring 1956, Adorno and Horkheimer discussed co-writing what Adorno considered an updated *Communist Manifesto* more appropriate to the mid-twentieth century. In these discussions – recorded, transcribed, and published posthumously[31] – they expressed needing to clearly articulate Marxism in contrast to Stalinism.

Marcuse was ambivalent about the USSR. In his 1958 *Soviet Marxism*, he described Stalin's 'socialism in one country' as a somewhat necessary yet deeply problematic response to the reality of the times, having to exist – and compete – in global capitalism. He kept some hope for the possibility of the eventual transformation of the USSR away from authoritarianism and toward a liberated socialism. Marcuse's sentiments were not unlike Lukács', who in 1962[32] pointed to the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact as strategically sound in the geopolitical short-term (to ward off a hypothetical partnership of the USA and Germany against the Soviets), but ultimately detrimental to the socialist platform. Stalin's ruthlessness and willingness to partner with Hitler sabotaged Soviet credibility as anything but totalitarian. The need to distinguish Marxism from Stalinism had also been articulated by Fromm and Korsch.[33] Horkheimer and Adorno's ambivalence toward the far-Left continued. While in their 1956 discussions they likewise voiced the need to contrast Marxism and Stalinism, they soon went further than Lukács, Korsch or Fromm.

2.5.2. The Student Movement

Marcuse's commitment to the far-Left also continued. The 1960s Frankfurt School benefited – and suffered – from increasing public attention, stemming from the New Left's reverence for Marcuse (Wheatland 2009). Marcuse's 1965 'Repressive Tolerance' (in Wolff et al.) argued for repression of intolerant voices. It was widely read and celebrated in the New Left. Habermas was somewhat ambivalent about the German student movement, at times acting in support, but also publicly characterizing a speech of a high-profile student activist as 'left-wing fascism.'

Adorno was consistently negative, not just of student activists but – similar to Reich – of authoritarian tendencies among the far-Left in general. In his 1960 radio address 'The Meaning of Working through the Past' Adorno (1998, 94) said 'Authoritarian personalities are altogether misunderstood when they are construed from the vantage point of a particular political-economic ideology; the well-known oscillations of millions of voters before 1933 between the National

Socialist and Communist parties is no accident from the social-psychological perspective either […] Basically, they possess weak egos and therefor require the compensation of identifying themselves with, and finding security in, great collectives.' In his 1968 radio address 'Resignation,' he denoted an 'authoritarian' tenor in Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, and decried Russian repression of dissent. Adorno was especially critical of students' anti-intellectualism, prematurely jumping to action instead of attending to theory (Adorno 1991).

He was critical of the university as well. In 1959, predicated on ideas from *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno (1993) articulated a theory of pseudo-education/culture (*Halbbildung*) criticizing late capitalist formal education: Modern education operates like popular culture – students instrumentally acquire knowledge-as-commodity, striving pragmatically for career success. They fail to engage in critical, independent thought, and are not transformed by education into culturally intelligent and engaged citizens, as in traditional *Bildung*. Formal education fosters instrumentality and internal numbing – priming students to accept authoritarian rule.[34] In a 1966 radio address – 'Education after Auschwitz' – Adorno insisted the most important thing formal education can do is prevent another Holocaust.[35] Students need to be encouraged to think independently and to be critical of society rather than just dispassionately gathering information about it.[36]

2.6. After the Horkheimer Circle: Passing the Torch

Adorno died in 1969, Horkheimer in 1973. The torch of leading the Frankfurt School passed to Habermas, who moved away from Marx and Freud. He also moved away from the explicit discussion of authoritarianism, prejudice and populism; focusing more specifically on social prerequisites for rational democratic deliberation. He explicitly distinguished his ideas from Freud and psychoanalysis in *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1971). In the 1970s he proposed a 'reconstruction' of Marx's theory of history, influenced by Mead and Kohlberg (1975a). His theory of *Legitimation Crisis* (1975b) retained remnants of Pollock's state capitalism theory, and dealt with the possibility of popular uprising, associated with lack of faith in the elite and prevailing social order. Habermas' crisis theory returned in his magnum opus The *Theory of Communicative Action* (1984, 1987), wherein he briefly discussed the temptation under crisis conditions for authoritarian attempts to return to less modern ways of life. He looked at styles of authority, organization, communication and rationality, but questions of economic exploitation and social oppression largely faded from view.

Fromm, who remained estranged from the 'Horkheimer Circle' since the late 1930s, returned to the topic of authoritarianism in *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (1973/1992). Here he presents a theory of 'malignant aggression,' influenced by his prior work on character types and existential needs. Fromm describes malignant aggression as when people harm others for pleasure, and

he claims it is rooted in deleterious social conditions that channel humanity's existential needs into destructive directions. He outlines two prone character types: the 'destructive character' who is sadistic, and the 'necrophilious character' who loves death. Illustrating the former, Fromm provides brief exposés of Stalin and Himmler. For the latter, he gives an extended example of Hitler including a biographical and analytical outline of his character development from birth to young adulthood.

In comparison with the surge of popularity in the 1960s, in the 1970s the work of the older Frankfurt School fell out of popular focus. In the German student movement, Leftists gravitated to orthodox Marxism. In the USA, an economic decline and a new wave of conservatism set in. This does not mean the work of the Horkheimer Circle and their associates had no presence in academia after the 1960s. Rather, their ideas were taken into the academy in simplified and diluted form (Wheatland 2009).

While Marcuse was gaining an activist following, Althusserian Marxism and French poststructuralism were beginning to bloom. Influenced by Marx via Gramsci and Freud via Lacan, these movements were somewhat distant cousins to Critical Theory. Gramsci, imprisoned by Italian fascists in 1926, wrote about fascism in *Prison Notebooks*. Poulantzas (1970) and Deleuze and Guattari (1972)[37] wrote on fascism in the early 1970s. Generally speaking, however, Althusserian (structuralist) Marxism fed into and then took a backseat to poststructuralism, which tended toward relativist linguistics and identity politics, away from directly critiquing political economy, authoritarianism and populism. One important exception – especially for the present volume – was in Stuart Hall's (1978/2013)[38] work in the late 1970s when, analysing British Thatcherism, he coined the term 'authoritarian populism.'

In recent years, with reference to the ascendance of the European and American far-Right, a host of public voices have cropped up arguing for a return to the early Frankfurt School. While Honneth has discussed racism in his writings on recognition (Honneth 1995; Fraser and Honneth 2003), neither the second nor third generation of the Frankfurt School has truly carried on the critique of authoritarianism that figured so prominently in the earlier IfS work by Horkheimer and colleagues. It is clear to growing numbers that their theoretical and empirical insights were very prescient and instructive, and are now of utmost pertinence. I hope that in the above pages I have conveyed something of the enormity of their accomplishments in the study of authoritarianism, prejudice and populism. The articles that follow in this volume are arranged to explain and exhibit the fruitful applicability of the work of the early IfS to the study of authoritarian populism in the twenty-first century.

3. Outline of the Present Volume

The first section, **Theories of Authoritarianism**, contains articles arguing for applications of early Critical Theory to contemporary authoritarian populism.

John Abromeit looks at the development of the Frankfurt School's work on authoritarian populism within its political and historical context, and argues for its current pertinence due to current European and American trends. The surge of neoliberalism in the 1980s and 1990s has helped to generate a state of Euro-America similar to the 1920s and 1930s. Thus, he recommends revisiting the 1930s theoretical work of Horkheimer – particularly his essay 'Egoism and Freedom Movements' – and of Fromm, both of which treat the relationship between capitalist crises and authoritarian populist movements, pressing realities for them during those years. After exploring Horkheimer's ideas from 'Egoism,' Abromeit brings together ideas and findings from *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, *The Authoritarian Personality*, *Prophets of Deceit* and the study of American workers' anti-Semitism during WWII. Against this background he analyses the USA today – specifically the Tea Party and Trump – exhibiting the fruitful applicability of several concepts from the aforementioned works. An earlier version of Abromeit's chapter, titled 'Critical Theory and the Persistence of Right-Wing Populism,' appeared in *Logos* 15 (2–3), 2016, available at: http://logosjournal.com/2016/abromeit/.

Lars Rensmann extracts from the writings of Löwenthal, Horkheimer and Adorno the key themes of the characteristics and techniques of populist leaders, the nature of authoritarian governance, and the psychological appeal of authoritarian populist leaders to their followers. He identifies various elements that reflect the techniques and psychosocial make-up of far-Right populist movements today across Europe, and reconstructs them into a unified framework for studying authoritarian populism in the contemporary moment. He divides the reconstruction into three paths: a) the 'authoritarian syndrome' from *The Authoritarian Personality*, b) psychological techniques of demagogic authoritarian populist public speakers, as described in *Prophets of Deceit* as well as several of Adorno's writings, and c) a combination of Adorno's dialectical theories of objectification, fetishization, and social domination, and Horkheimer's racket theory of government.

Samir Gandesha argues against two recent theoretical perspectives on populism, and argues instead for Critical Theory from the 1930s and 1940s. The first theoretical perspective is from Norris and Inglehart, who discuss populism (too narrowly) as a right-wing cultural backlash from an older generation of European and American white men who resent their loss of authority as progressive values have gained among younger generations. Gandesha describes their argument as underdeveloped, and warns it is dangerous to passively accept the view that 'progress' will naturally happen with changing generations. Once in power, authoritarians can change the rules of the game, with influence beyond their immediate time and demographic. The second perspective is from Laclau, who discusses populism (too narrowly) as a left-wing phenomenon. Laclau's take is rooted in the philosophical lineage stemming from Gramsci and Lacan, much more sophisticated than Norris and Inglehart. Yet Laclau ventures

too far into unanchored, open-ended poststructuralism, ignoring important historical continuities. Neither Norris and Inglehart's nor Laclau's theory sufficiently addresses economic conditions or group/mass psychology. By contrast, IfS thinkers such as Adorno and Fromm do. Gandesha proceeds to distinguish qualities associated with left- vis-à-vis right-wing populisms.

Douglas Kellner uses Fromm's character typology to critique Trump, employing concepts from *Escape from Freedom*, *The Sane Society*, and *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*. Fromm's analysis of Hitler's anger-fuelled mass following correlates with sections of Trump's following; many of whom are idolatrous and frame Trump as a 'magic helper.' Trump fits several of Fromm's character types: the narcissistic character, and the malignantly aggressive sadistic character and necrophilious character. An earlier version of Kellner's chapter first appeared in *Logos* 15 (2–3), summer 2016, available at: http://logosjournal.com/2016/kellner-2/, and subsequently in Kellner's 2016 *American Nightmare: Donald Trump, Media Spectacle, and Authoritarian Populism*, Sense Publishers.

The next section, **Foundations of Authoritarianism**, focuses on using Critical Theory to illuminate the historical roots of authoritarian populism.

Stephen Eric Bronner presents us – in kinship to the tradition stemming from Horkheimer's 'Egoism' essay – with 'the bigot': an anthropological type along the lines of Fromm's 'sadomasochistic character' and Adorno et al.'s 'authoritarian syndrome.' Bronner identifies capitalist modernity as underlying the bigot's emergence, and colourfully exposes bigot psychology. In the Western past, women's rights and tolerance of diversity were minimal, and much prejudice and inequality was as common and normalized as to be invisible, or at least unarticulated as problematic. Modernity destroys that cosy ignorance, and benefits of hierarchy are stripped from the privileged, who are consequently not as privileged as they would like, and not as privileged as afforded their perceived ilk historically. Modernity also erodes family, small-town community, and much tradition. The bigot wants to halt these erosions and retreat back to old ways which seem more solid. Out of this angst grows intolerance for social change and for Others with different ways of life. Bronner closes with a brief history and critique of post-WWII identity politics, which he describes with sympathy, but warns of its divisive propensities; identity politics fight and feed bigotry simultaneously. Bronner's chapter was originally published as 'Modernity,' the opening chapter of his 2014 *The Bigot: Why Prejudice Persists*, Yale University Press.

Charles Reitz argues for looking beneath the appearance of authoritarian populist movements, to understand the historical material conditions that generate them. The dynamics of capitalist development must be recognized as primary determinants of these reactionary movements. Reitz champions Marcuse's ideas, surveying a wide range of his writings and showing his prescience and immediate pertinence. Decades ago, Marcuse foresaw where the West

was headed, and forecast the struggles which we now face. Reitz insists that recognizing capitalism as driving authoritarianism begs that we build an alternative world-system. He proposes a vision influenced by Marx, Marcuse, and ecological philosopher Aldo Leopold: 'Green Commonwealth.'

Jeremiah Morelock and Felipe Ziotti Narita bring Habermas and Wallerstein into conversation, applying their ideas to populisms outside the global core. They argue Habermas' earlier ideas from *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962/1991) and *The Theory of Communicative Action* can be usefully applied to populism, yet they would benefit by being paired with Wallerstein's world-systems analysis. Together they can offer a comprehensive perspective on how populist movements take shape within modernizing nations: rooted in the lifeworld yet instigated and shaped within a changing global division of labour, economic development and urbanization. This can be especially useful for understanding populisms arising in (semi)peripheral areas, such as in Latin America. The authors apply the Habermas-Wallerstein pairing to several movements in Latin American history.

The final section is on **Digital Authoritarianism**, containing articles that apply Critical Theory to authoritarian populism on social media.

Christian Fuchs studies right-wing extremism online, specifically on Facebook. He begins by discussing the concept 'ideology,' pointing to lack of consensus on its meaning. He contrasts Gramscian 'ideology theory' inherited by Althusser, Laclau, and Stuart Hall, with Lukácsian 'ideology critique' inherited by IfS. Fuchs favours ideology critique, which offers a more solid footing to recognize real social struggles and oppose domination. After a critical history of the far-Right Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), Fuchs uses critical discourse analysis to investigate how voters for the FPÖ candidate in the 2016 Austrian presidential election express their support over Facebook. Analysing 6,755 Facebook comments on the pages for leading FPÖ politicians Strache and Hofer, Fuchs discovers much right-wing extremist ideology. He describes five discourse topics in the data: charismatic leadership, Austrian nationalism, the friend-enemy scheme, new racism (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991), and violence. He presents visual samples of the original Facebook posts from Hofer and Strache. Fuchs' article was originally published in *Momentum Quarterly: Journal for Societal Progress*, 5 (3), 172–196, in 2016 under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license.

Panayota Gounari applies critical discourse analysis to Trump's tweets, informed by *Prophets of Deceit*, Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), and Wodak's Frankfurt-School-influenced work on right-wing populist discourse. Gounari extracts six analytical categories from Löwenthal and Guterman and Wodak concerning authoritarian populist demagoguery, and several aspects of the 'one-dimensional discourse' found on Twitter. Combing through thousands of samples from TrumpTwitterArchive, she finds many instances fitting the categories.

Forrest Muelrath compares the theatrical properties of the Trump social media spectacle and Wagnerian opera as Adorno articulated. Muelrath centres on Benjamin's and Adorno's treatment of the concept 'phantasmagoria': in Marx, the aspect of commodity fetishism whereby human labour is occluded and commodities are experienced with quasi-mysterious and heightened allure. In Wagnerian opera, Adorno identified phantasmagoria in the dramatism of staged events that hit the viewer with larger-than-life intensity, the processes underlying their appearances being concealed. Muelrath explains how Trump's social media appearances occlude not only human labour, but also the work of 'automatic machines' that regularly operate outside of human observation and direction. In fake news, information technology contributes to the drama of 'the Trump opera,' the heightened emotions surrounding it, and the erosion of the capacity of the social media audience to determine reality from fiction.

Notes

[1] The is from a letter to Salka Viertel, quoted in Claussen 2008, 161.

[2] See Moffitt 2016, Abromeit et al. 2016, and Judis 2016.

[3] In this outline I lean heavily on Jay 1973 and Wiggershaus 1995. My debt to these tomes is substantial. I consulted both works very closely throughout writing this introduction.

[4] Republished in Horkheimer 1972 and Marcuse 1968.

[5] See: Hall et al. 1978 and Hall 1980.

[6] Thus, while many of the Frankfurt School's insights fit present times, one should not equate, for example, Trump with Hitler.

[7] It was unpopular among Reich's political associates, however, causing his ejection from the German Communist Party. While primarily – and virulently – critiquing Nazism, he had associated Bolshevism with it. He called Soviet communism 'red fascism,' in contrast to Nazi 'black fascism.'

[8] Marcuse's article is republished in English ('The Struggle Against Liberalism in the Totalitarian View of the State') in *Negations* (1968).

[9] The Institute planned for publication of Fromm's results in 1936, but it was deferred, and the work went unpublished until decades later.

[10] Much more was included in the *Studien*, totaling close to 1000 pages.

[11] Republished as 'Authority and the Family' in Horkheimer 1972.

[12] Republished in Löwenthal 1986.

[13] *In Search of Wagner* was translated into English in 1952.

[14] Adorno returned to connecting Wagner to Nazism in his 1947 review essay 'Wagner, Nietzsche and Hitler,' where he called Wagner a 'sadomasochistic character' (156).

[15] Adorno's work on Thomas went unpublished until 1975, translated into English in 2000.

[16] By this time Fromm had gone a separate direction from the 'Horkheimer Circle,' namely due to his optimistic humanism, and to his desexualizing of Freud.

[17] In *Man for Himself* (1947/1990) Fromm further developed his character typology. In *The Sane Society* (1955/2012), he expanded his theory of existential needs. He now identified five, each containing a possibility of healthy or unhealthy response: relatedness (vs. narcissism), transcendence (creativeness vs. destructiveness), rootedness (brotherliness vs. incest), sense of identity (individuality vs. herd conformity), and frame of orientation and devotion (reason vs. irrationality). Fromm continued to posit that capitalist society compels people to adopt nonproductive orientations and unhealthy responses to existential needs.

[18] This contradicts the classical Marxian prediction of inevitable capitalist crisis and collapse.

[19] Although not in IfS – and not involved in the debate – Reich adopted Pollock's term in the 1942 preface to *Mass Psychology*'s third edition (1946/1970).

[20] The issue also contained an outline of their early plan for a comprehensive 'Research Project on Anti-Semitism,' republished in Adorno 1994.

[21] See also Horkheimer's 'The Authoritarian State' in Arato and Gebhardt 1982.

[22] In 1944 Neumann's book was republished expanded as *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism, 1933–1944*.

[23] The final two subsections are on fascism.

[24] See: Laudani's introduction in Neumann et al. 2013.

[25] Reich (1946/2007, xiii), original italics.

[26] 'Some Mechanisms of the Emotional Plague' was written at some point in 1940–1942, published in 1945 in *International Journal of Sex-Economy and Orgone Research,* 4 (1), and included in the 1949 third addition of *Character Analaysis*. Reich published a two-volume series in 1953 called 'The Emotional Plague of Mankind': *The Murder of Christ* and *People in Trouble*.

[27] A shorter prior edition was published in 1944.

[28] For more on Judaism, see: Horkheimer's 1939 'The Jews and Europe' in Horkheimer 1995 and his 1961 'The German Jews' in Horkheimer 1974.

[29] This category is reminiscent of Fromm's (1980) ambivalent Weimar workers.

[30] See also: 'Authoritarianism and the Family Today,' Horkheimer 1972.

[31] See: Adorno and Horkheimer 2011.

[32] See: 'Reflections on the Cult of Stalin' https://www.marxists.org/archive/lukacs/works/1962/stalin.htm and Lukács 1968.

[33] See: Fromm 1935 and Korsch 1950.

[34] See: Morelock 2017 for more on the pertinence of Adorno's theory of education in light of present day authoritarian populism.

[35] 'Education after Auschwitz' originally appeared with Adorno's other 1960s radio addresses in Adorno 1970, republished in Adorno 1998.

³⁶ Adorno emphasized this in a 1969 radio interview later transcribed as 'Education for Autonomy' in Adorno 1970, English translation in *Telos*, 1983.
³⁷ Deleuze and Guattari took considerable influence from Reich in their *Anti-Oedipus* (1972).
³⁸ See also: Hall 1980.

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Theories of Authoritarianism

CHAPTER I

Frankfurt School Critical Theory and the Persistence of Authoritarian Populism in the United States[1]

John Abromeit

1.1. Introduction

Although the rise of right-wing populist movements and parties in Europe in the past few decades and the more recent success of the Tea Party in the United States has received ample attention from social scientists, the continuing growth of these parties in Europe and the recent election of Donald Trump as the President of the United States has confounded and surprised many scholars. Ten years ago, very few scholars would have predicted that right-wing populist parties would be actually governing (as in Hungary and Poland); threatening to govern (as in France and Switzerland); forming powerful and influential opposition parties (as in Austria, The Netherlands, Denmark, and Slovakia); or emerging as a new force in electoral politics (as in Britain, Sweden, Finland, and even Germany). Before 2016, very few scholars would have predicted that the British would vote to leave the European Union and Donald Trump would be elected president. In what follows, I would like to argue that this widespread

astonishment among social scientists, and their difficulty in explaining the persistent and growing success of right-wing populism in Europe and the United States, reveals historical and critical theoretical blind spots in their work, which could be addressed by revisiting the rich body of work on right-wing populism and authoritarianism in the writings of the members of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research. Beginning the late 1920s and continuing into the post-war period, Max Horkheimer and his colleagues at the Institute produced a number of important historical, theoretical and empirical studies that can still shed light on the persistence of right-wing populism and authoritarianism from the twentieth into the twenty-first century.

This paper will examine the ways in which Critical Theory was decisively shaped during its exile in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s. It will also examine how and why the 'scientific experiences' of the Critical Theorists in the U.S. are still relevant to explaining contemporary social and political developments in their country of exile.[2] The first part of this essay will provide a brief overview of the Critical Theorists' studies of authoritarianism and right-wing populism. I will emphasize, in particular, the empirical studies they carried out in the U.S. in the 1940s, but I will also examine some key concepts from *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, such as the concept of bourgeois anti-Semitism. The second part of the paper will examine the emergence of the Tea Party and Donald Trump's success in expanding and intensifying this right-wing populist movement by harnessing it to his own authoritarian leadership. Drawing on the conceptual resources outlined in the first section, I will demonstrate how the Critical Theorists' analyses of right-wing populism and authoritarianism can still explain key aspects of the Tea Party and Trump that have taken many contemporary social scientists by surprise. Throughout this essay Critical Theory and right-wing populism will be situated within two levels of historical periodization. The first – to which I will only gesture – will be the modern bourgeois epoch as whole. The second will be specific periods within that epoch: in particular, the historical periods that coincide with the emergence, decline and re-emergence of right-wing populism from the late nineteenth century to the present. The aim of the latter periodization is to illuminate the specific historical and social conditions that have inhibited or favoured the emergence of right-wing populist and authoritarian movements.

1.2.   Revisiting the Critical Theorists' Analyses of Right-Wing Populism and Authoritarianism

1.2.1.   *Horkheimer's Analysis of the Sociohistorical Roots of Authoritarian Populism*

Crucial to the development of Frankfurt School Critical Theory were their ongoing efforts to understand fascism. They understood fascism to a significant

extent as a form of right-wing authoritarian populism, which reached unprecedented extremes in National Socialist Germany, but which was by no means unique to Germany. They viewed fascism as a result of powerful socio-historical and social psychological tendencies that were present in all advanced capitalist societies. 'Der Fascismus ist kein Zufall gewesen,' as Adorno once put it.[3] A good point of departure for a re-examination of the Critical Theorists' rich body of work on authoritarianism is Max Horkheimer's 1937 essay, 'Egoism and Freedom Movements: On the Anthropology of the Bourgeois Epoch,' in which he analyses the historical origins of fascism in terms of a transformation of popular protest movements – what he calls 'bourgeois freedom movements' – from the left to the right, which corresponds to the historical transformation of the relationship of the bourgeoisie to the lower classes that occurred in Europe during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is important to revisit Horkheimer's essay not only because of its argument about the transformation of popular protest movements and the populist ideology of their leaders, but also because it provided the historical and theoretical foundations for much of the empirical work on authoritarianism that the Institute carried out in the United States in the 1940s. As Martin Jay put it, 'as a seed-bed for much of the Frankfurt School's later work, it is virtually unparalleled.' (Jay 1982, 5).

In the 'Egoism' essay, Horkheimer examines different leaders of popular social movements in the early modern period, whose attempts to mobilize or to control the lower classes consolidated the power of bourgeois society. His case studies are Cola di Rienzo and Savanarola, the leaders of popular protest movements in Rome and Florence in the fourteenth and fifteenth-century; Luther, Calvin and the Reformation; and Robespierre and the French Revolution. In each case, Horkheimer stresses the peculiar relationship between the bourgeois leaders and the lower classes that plays itself out over the course of these movements. He writes,

> The bourgeoisie's efforts to push through its own demands for a more rational administration against the feudal powers with the help of the desperate popular masses, while simultaneously consolidating its own rule over the masses, combine to account for the peculiar way the struggle for the 'the people' is carried on in these movements (Horkheimer 1993, 61–62).

On the one hand, Horkheimer emphasizes the genuinely progressive aspects of these social movements, which result from the shared interest of the bourgeoisie and the lower classes in overthrowing aristocratic and/or absolutist rule. On the other hand, Horkheimer pays close attention to the authoritarian aspects of these movements, which express the incipient divergence of the interests of the bourgeoisie and the lower classes. After the bourgeois revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this latent conflict of interest would emerge with the rise of a powerful socialist movement in the nineteenth century, which would

challenge the new hegemony of the bourgeoisie. The emergence of fascism in Europe in the 1920s represented something qualitatively new, insofar as it broke with the traditional conservatism of the nineteenth century and involved the mobilization of 'the people' against a perceived threat from the socialist left. Looking out over a rising tide of fascism in Europe in 1937, Horkheimer wrote,

> The uprisings that have taken place in the most recent past in some European states are […] not absolutist or clerical reactions but the staging of a bourgeois pseudo-revolution with radical populist trappings, wholly contrary to any possible reorganization of society. The forms they take seem to be a bad imitation of the movements previously discussed (Horkheimer 1993, 97).

Here we can see that Horkheimer stresses the populist elements of fascism, but also the different function these elements play within the changed social and historical conditions of early twentieth-century Europe. Simplifying somewhat, one could say that the progressive elements that had characterized the early modern movements disappeared, and only the authoritarian elements remained.[4]

The main point for our purposes here is that Horkheimer's essay provides a historical analysis of the transformation of populism within the larger transformation of bourgeois society, which highlights the emergence of powerful right-wing populist tendencies in Europe in the late nineteenth century and which led to successful fascist movements in several European countries in the 1920s and 1930s. One must stop to reflect upon the fact that the very idea of a 'right-wing populism' must have seemed like a contradiction in terms at the time. Populism and appeals to 'the people,' 'das Volk,' were a staple of nineteenth-century liberal and democratic movements, and nineteenth century traditional conservatives were firmly anti-democratic and anti-populist. Yet, by the late nineteenth century they had also come to realize that the battle against democracy was hopeless; if conservative elites hoped to protect their positions of power in an 'age of the masses' they would need to learn to play the game of democracy, to insure outcomes that were favourable to them.[5] Symptomatic of the new right-wing populist strategy was the archconservative *Kreuz-Zeitung*, which changed its masthead after WWI from 'Vorwärts mit Gott für König und Vaterland' to 'Für das deutsche Volk' (Fritzsche 1998, 111) [6]. But as more recent historical scholarship has emphasized, this new right-wing populism was by no means simply an invention of conservative elites.[7] Such elites were eager to manipulate it, but its origins were genuinely spontaneous and popular. The emergence of right-wing populism at the beginning of the twentieth century as a qualitatively new social and political force in industrial capitalist societies must, in other words, be understood as a combination of genuinely grassroots activism and attempts by conservative elites to manipulate these movements for their own purposes.

Horkheimer and his colleagues at the Institute were interested in both of these aspects of right-wing populism. Already in their first major empirical study of blue and white-collar workers in the final years of the Weimar Republic, Horkheimer and Erich Fromm sought to determine how susceptible German blue and white-collar workers were to the temptations of authoritarian political movements on the right (Fromm 1983). The study indicated that if such a movement attempted to take power in Germany, resistance from these groups would be minimal. Their findings would be confirmed just a few years later. The Institute's next major empirical study sought to examine how authoritarian attitudes among the middle and lower classes in Europe and the U.S. were conditioned by the changing structure of the family. For my purposes here, I would like to dwell a bit longer on the empirical studies that were carried out in the United States in the 1940s, which illustrated the basic assumption that right-wing populist and authoritarian social and political tendencies were by no means limited to Germany or Europe.

1.2.2. The Paradigm Shift in Critical Theory around 1940

But before proceeding to a discussion of some of the findings of these studies, I would like to briefly examine the paradigm shift in Critical Theory around 1940. This shift reflected the larger socio-economic, historical and political transformations that had occurred in Europe and the United States over the course of the 1930s. Summarizing quickly, one can say that the Great Depression led to the final collapse of the old liberal economic order and the rise of new forms of state-centric capitalism in Europe.[8] This global economic and political realignment was registered most clearly in Horkheimer's Critical Theory in his adoption of his friend Friedrich Pollock's state capitalism thesis, which had far-reaching implications for the Institute's theoretical and empirical work in the following decades.[9] Whereas Horkheimer's Critical Theory in the 1930s had rested firmly on a critical, and undogmatic Marxist theory of the historical transformation of modern bourgeois society, Pollock's state capitalism thesis implied that Marx's critique of political economy was no longer as important, since the independent dynamic of capitalism had been brought under control by relatively autonomous states. Social domination was now exercised directly through politics, rather than indirectly through underlying economic relations. Other symptoms of the paradigm shift in Critical Theory included the theory of rackets and of the administered society, which Horkheimer and Adorno introduced in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. These theoretical categories reflected the new hegemony of the Fordist-Keynesian model of capitalism that developed in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s, and was consolidated in Western Europe after World War II. From our vantage point today, we can see that this period of twentieth-century capitalism, which lasted through the end of the 1960s in Europe and the United States, was an anomaly. Historians

and economists such as Eric Hobsbawm and Thomas Piketty have described it as a 'Golden Age,' because of the historically unprecedented growth of capitalism and the redistribution of wealth downward that occurred during this time (Hobsbawm 1994, 257–88; Piketty 2014, 20–27, 271–303). The hegemony of Keynesian models of economics and the broad acceptance of a robust welfare state during this time also created a historical climate that was unfavourable to right-wing populist movements in Europe and the United States, with a few exceptions, such as McCarthyism in the United States and the Poujadist movement in France.

That said, when the Institute was carrying out their major empirical studies of anti-Semitism, prejudice and authoritarianism in the United States in the 1940s they were still very much concerned with the question of 'could it happen here?' (Ziege 2009, 169–71). The fact that the Institute attributed so much importance to this question, demonstrates once again their belief that right-wing populist authoritarianism was not merely a pathology of German culture or German backwardness, but was instead a potential threat in all advanced capitalist societies, and one that could become more powerful in the future if objective conditions changed. In his 1949 preface to Löwenthal and Guterman's *Prophets of Deceit*, Horkheimer justifies their study of the techniques of authoritarian agitators in the following way:

> American hatemongers are at present at a low point in influence and prestige. […] But because the emphasis of the book is on the meaning of the phenomena under analysis, the agitator should be studied in the light of his *potential effectiveness* with the context of present-day society and its dynamics, rather than in terms of his immediate effectiveness (Horkheimer 1949, xii, emphasis my own).

In short, even though the objective conditions for authoritarian social movements were unfavourable in the U.S. in the 1940s, Horkheimer and his colleagues at the Institute dedicated much of their energy and resources to studying them. *Prophets of Deceit* is an excellent example. In the preface to the study, they explicitly acknowledge their theoretical debt to Horkheimer's analysis of the social and social-psychological dynamics at work in earlier popular protest movements (Löwenthal and Guterman 1949, xvi). Through a content analysis of the speeches and writings of American right-wing populist agitators from the 1930s and 1940s, Löwenthal and Guterman sought to uncover the unconscious dynamics at work in the relationship between leaders and followers in authoritarian movements. In their study Löwenthal and Guterman identify approximately twenty different themes that recur in the texts of the agitators. Many of themes have remained remarkably relevant in terms of analysing right-wing populist movements in Europe and the U.S. right up to the present day. In what follows, I will focus on just a few that are directly relevant to the right-wing populist movement in the U.S. that began with the Tea Party and

continues at present under the leadership of Donald Trump – both of which will be discussed in the subsequent section.

1.2.3. Löwenthal, Guterman, and Adorno's Analyses of Authoritarian Populism in the U.S.

Löwenthal and Guterman emphasize that, in contrast to European fascist movements, the American authoritarian agitator has no pre-liberal-democratic tradition to fall back on, yet this lack 'does not prevent him from conveying the principal social tenets of totalitarianism to his audience' (135). They write, 'The American agitator falls back on the clichés of professional Patriotism, Fourth of July Americanism' (106). 'All he can offer is a rededication to the established institutional and ideological framework of the American republic as it has persisted since the founding fathers…If anything has gone wrong, it can be only because we Americans…have strayed from American ways' (96). The agitator appeals to 'individualists who still believe in Constitutional government and the American way of life' (108). Populist anti-intellectualism also figures prominently in his rhetorical arsenal. They write, 'Seizing on the "simple folk" theme as a pretext for fostering an aggressively anti-intellectual attitude, the agitator describes his American Americans as a people of good instincts and, he is happy to say, little sophistication' (109). Despite these appeals to conservative tradition and the common people, the agitator is hostile to politicians and the government, especially to Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the New Deal. He is 'amazed at the lack of courage exhibited in America by its foremost business executives and managers to resist the aggressions of political bureaucrats and revolutionists in Washington' (48). Löwenthal and Guterman continue, 'Such seemingly trivial remarks serve to glorify the direct rule of economic power groups at the expense of representative government' (48). Although the agitator is hostile to the government, he 'invariably identifies himself with the forces of law and order, and especially the police' (100).

In his contribution to *The Authoritarian Personality,* Adorno addresses many of these same themes, especially in his discussion of the concept of pseudo-conservatism, which was his most direct attempt to describe the typical beliefs and character structure of those most drawn to authoritarian populist social movements in the U.S. In contrast to the genuine conservative, who is willing to defend basic democratic institutions such as minority rights and representative government, the pseudo-conservative 'is a man who, in the name of upholding traditional American values and institutions and defending them against more or less fictitious dangers, consciously or unconsciously aims at their abolition' (Adorno et al. 1950, 676). The pseudo-conservatives' suspicion of existing democratic institutions is based on what Adorno calls a 'usurpation complex,' which is the idea that these institutions have been captured by forces that are hostile to 'genuine Americans.' In the 1940s this pseudo-conservative

vitriol was often directed against Roosevelt, whom they viewed as both a so-cialist and snobby elitist. Roosevelt and other progressives are seen as usurp-ers because they 'assume a power position which should be reserved for the 'right people' […] legitimate rulers are those who are actually in command of the machinery of production – not those who owe their ephemeral power to formal political processes' (676). Adorno argues that 'the pseudo-conservative mentality strives – diffusedly and semiconsciously – to establish a dictatorship of the economically strongest group. This is to be achieved by means of a mass movement; one which promises security and privileges to the so-called "little man"' (685). Pseudo-conservatives' deep distrust of government and politicians as a whole, goes hand-in-hand with a lack of empathy for the poor and rejec-tion of social welfare programs. Adherents of 'economic rugged individualism,' pseudo-conservatives object to state interference in the 'natural' laws of the market and embrace the spirit of the adage, 'those who do not work, shall not eat.' This contempt for the poor as parasites usually goes hand-in-hand with admiration for the wealthy and successful as the supposedly most productive members of society.

This ideology of producers and parasites also reappears in the Institute's study of anti-Semitism among American workers in the 1940s.[10] The study re-vealed that, when comparing the United States to Europe, anti-Semitism was not only more widespread among workers than among the middle class, but also that it assumed more 'modern' forms. In other words, American work-ers were largely free of the more vulgar and crudely conspiratorial forms of European anti-Semitism, which portrayed Jews as lecherous and/or violent predators. The forms of anti-Semitism widespread among American workers almost always involved economic issues and the belief that Jews sought to avoid manual labour at all costs. Through deception and manipulation, they survived as parasites and exploiters among the majority of virtuous, hard-working Gen-tiles. Interestingly, this form of anti-Semitism among American workers cor-responded most closely to what Horkheimer and Adorno described in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* as 'bourgeois' anti-Semitism. Bourgeois anti-Semitism rested upon an ideological distinction between the 'schaffend' and the 'raffend.' The former, the virtuous producers, include not just workers and peasants, but also manufacturing and large industry. The latter, the immoral parasites, include bureaucrats, politicians, merchants and especially bankers. Drawing on Marx and Engels' critique of Proudhon, Eugen Dühring, and of left and right-wing forms of populist anti-Semitism in the nineteenth century, Horkheimer and Adorno point out that bourgeois anti-Semitism rests on the concealment of social domination in the ownership of the means of production. Whereas Marx and Engels had focused on the exploitation of wage labour by capital, populist anti-Semitism and fascism portray wage labour and capital as productive al-lies in the struggle against parasitic politicians and bankers. The fact that these bourgeois forms of anti-Semitism were so widespread among American work-ers, points to what Adorno would describe later as the 'radically bourgeois'

character of American society as a whole; that is, to the fact that socialist con-
sciousness – which in Europe had also included a critique of anti-Semitism as
the 'socialism of fools' – was virtually non-existent among American workers.[11]
Their anti-Semitism was a distorted protest against the capitalist exploitation
of labour, but one which rested upon a complete identification of workers with
the bourgeois values of hard work and self-discipline (Worrell 2008, 119–88).

1.2.4. *Frankfurt School Critical Theory and the History of the Twentieth Century*

Before continuing with some remarks on how the Tea Party and Donald Trump
exemplify many of the characteristics of right-wing populist movements iden-
tified by Horkheimer, Adorno and Löwenthal, I would like to return to my
earlier reflections on how the development of Frankfurt School Critical Theory
fits into the larger history of the twentieth century. I mentioned earlier that
the rise of state-centric forms of capitalism in the mid-twentieth century cre-
ated conditions unfavourable to authoritarian social movements in the U.S.
and Western Europe. In the 1970s there was a transition from the Fordist-
Keynesian model of capitalism in the 1950s and 1960s, to a new post-Fordist,
neo-liberal phase, which has lasted through the present. If only briefly, I would
like to advance the claim that these changed social conditions have created a
climate which more closely resembles the 1920s and 1930s in some ways and
which is more conducive to right-wing populist movements in Europe and the
United States. After a period of transition in the 1970s, the new hegemony of
neo-liberal ideas was marked by the elections of Ronald Reagan and Marga-
ret Thatcher, but also by Helmut Kohl and the conservative 'Tendenzwende' in
West Germany in the early 1980s. In all three cases, some key right-wing popu-
list ideas were adopted and put into practice – albeit in a more moderate form –
by newly dominant conservative parties. Even in France, François Mitterand
was forced to abandon his ambitious campaign promises of socialist economic
reforms and to adopt much more business- friendly policies in the early 1980s.
France offers a particularly clear example, not only of the defeat of traditional
socialist ideas, but also the emergence of new right-wing populist, authoritar-
ian political movements in the 1980s. At the same time that the French so-
cialist party was making serious concessions to the new neo-liberal orthodoxy
and the French communist party was entering a period of terminal decline,
the right-wing populist Front National was emerging as a new force in French
electoral politics. As the Dutch political scientist, Cas Mudde, has pointed out,
the Front Nationale was only one of a whole new family of right-wing populist
movements and parties that would emerge in Europe in the 1980s and 1990s
(Mudde 2016). The collapse of Soviet Communism in 1989 only reinforced the
now triumphalist hegemony of neoliberalism and the 'Washington Consensus.'
Bill Clinton and Tony Blair made clear that 'new' Democrats and 'new' Labour

had fully embraced neo-liberal ideas. When asked in 2002 what her greatest achievement was, Thatcher replied, 'Tony Blair and New Labour.'

The larger point I am trying to make here – far too briefly – is that the 1980s and 1990s were marked by a very significant shift to the right in the overall political spectrum in both Europe and the United States. Socialists, Democrats and Social Democrats' embrace of neoliberalism; rising levels of inequality and unemployment; and the threat of new capitalist crises, such as the one that occurred in 2008, have created fertile ground for the emergence of new right-wing populist movements. To be sure, democratic institutions and traditions are much stronger now in Europe than they were in the 1920s and 1930s, and even the new right-wing populist parties generally accept the pre-conditions of democracy, rather than opposing them. Nonetheless, three and a half decades of neo-liberal hegemony have created conditions – rising levels of poverty, in-security, hopelessness – that resemble the 1920s and 1930s more closely than the 1950s and 60s. For this reason, I think it is also worth revisiting what I have called elsewhere the model of early Critical Theory, which guided the Institute's work in the 1930s and which explored the relationship between capitalist crisis and authoritarian social movements. Horkheimer's essay on 'Egoism and Freedom Movements' is – as mentioned – paradigmatic in this regard, but Erich Fromm's closely related writings from the 1930s on the social-psychological dynamics of authoritarianism should also be mentioned in this context.[12] In contrast to the post-World War II period, when social and economic conditions were not conducive to the emergence of authoritarian movements, Horkheimer and Fromm's writings from the 1930s are based on direct observations of the links between capitalist crisis and right-wing populism and, thus, should be revisited in light of the recent reemergence of crisis and authoritarianism in the U.S. and Europe.

1.3. The Resurgence of Right-Wing Populism in U.S.: The Tea Party and Donald Trump

1.3.1. Right-Wing Populism from Below: The Tea Party

In the next section of my paper I would like to take a closer look at the Tea Party movement in the United States. The Tea Party burst upon the American political scene in the Spring of 2009, in response to the election of Barack Obama and the economic crisis of 2008. The original call for Tea Party rallies came from a reporter in Chicago by the name of Rick Santelli, who went ballistic over newly elected President Obama's declared intention to help people threatened with losing their homes as a result of the sub-prime lending crisis. In his rant, which soon went viral on YouTube, Santelli accused the government of 're-warding bad behavior' and he called on 'America's capitalists' to protest measures to 'subsidize losers' mortgages' (Skocpol and Williams 2012, 7). The Tea

Party soon developed into one of the largest upsurges of grass roots political activism in the United States since the 1960s. This grass roots activism, combined with generous support from wealthy, ultraconservative national political organizations and powerful conservative media outlets, such as Fox News, made the Tea Party a new political force to be reckoned with. At the highpoint of its political influence, the midterm elections in November, 2010, the Tea Party contributed significantly to a Republican landslide. The Republicans won 63 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, six seats in the Senate, six new governorships, and they made equally impressive gains in state legislatures across the nation. Many of the victorious candidates supported by the Tea Party had defeated more moderate Republicans in primary elections. The overall effect was to shift national politics significantly to the right.[13] Polls conducted in 2010 and 2011 demonstrated repeatedly that approximately 30% of Americans 'supported,' and 20% 'strongly supported' the Tea Party. Although they failed to prevent Barack Obama's re-election in 2012, they played an important role in the Republicans' sweeping gains in the midterm elections of 2014. In their study, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism*, the Harvard sociologist and political scientist, Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, argue that the Tea Party has succeeded in revitalizing the Republican Party, which as recently as 2009 seemed like a party in decline. In the process, the Tea Party has also succeeded in pushing the Republican Party to the right on many issues; one could say, using Adorno's aforementioned distinction, that Tea Party pseudo-conservatives have succeeded in strengthening their position vis-à-vis traditional conservatives within the Republican Party.

Contrary to some commentators who viewed the Tea Party as a new independent force in American politics, Skocpol and Williamson argue convincingly that it represents 'the most recent incarnation of American conservative populism' (81). So, when one studies the Tea Party more closely, it should not come as a surprise that a strikingly high level of correlation exists between their unifying beliefs and the main characteristics of the right-wing populist agitators and authoritarian personalities that Horkheimer, Adorno and Löwenthal studied in the U.S. in the 1940s. These include hyperbolic 'Fourth of July Patriotism' and frequent appeals to the Founding Fathers and a return to government based directly on the U.S. Constitution, which is interpreted dogmatically as supporting Tea Party doctrine. One very popular book among the Tea Party called *The Five Thousand Year Leap*, purports to explain the links between the Bible and the U.S. Constitution.[14] Such historical fundamentalism also illustrates the widespread belief among the Tea Party that the United States has been corrupted by foreign elements and needs to purge itself in order to return to its former pristine state – what Adorno called the 'usurpation complex.' Such foreign elements include undocumented immigrants, whom 82% of Tea Party members view as a 'very serious' problem. Much more serious, however, in the eyes of almost all Tea Party members, is President Obama himself. It is not a coincidence that the Tea Party emerged shortly after his election. Not unlike

Löwenthal's agitators and Adorno's authoritarian personalities, who viewed Franklin Delano Roosevelt as both a communist and a snobby elitist, Tea Party members view Obama as a socialist and a condescending elitist, but also as a foreigner and a Muslim. Skocpol and Williamson stress the centrality of Obama as 'the devil incarnate' to the Tea Party, and 'free-wheeling anti-Obama paranoia' as common fare. Hatred of Obama is also fuelled by the Tea Party's more general distrust of government, which is grounded in their ultra-liberal and Social Darwinist economic views. The 'natural' laws of the market must be allowed to run their course and government should not intervene to help the poor. The Tea Party is anti-union and pro-business for the same reason. They make no distinction between small businesses and large corporations and they are opposed to raising taxes on anyone, including the wealthiest Americans. A few interesting exceptions to their generally anti-government views include a lack of concern about large military budgets, a pro-police and pro-military stance, and the belief that stricter policing of undocumented immigrants is necessary. Here we see the same anti-government, pro-police attitude that Adorno described in *The Authoritarian Personality* and also linked to the rise of fascism in Europe.

I would like to dwell slightly longer on the other exception to the Tea Party's anti-government views, because it represents one of Skocpol and Williamson's most interesting findings. They found that most grass roots members of the Tea Party do support certain government programs, such as Social Security and Medicare, which they view as helping 'deserving' American citizens. Some of the far-right libertarian national organizations that have supported and funded local Tea Party groups advocate for the privatization of Social Security and Medicare. But these views remain unpopular among rank-and-file members, whose sense of deserving and undeserving members of society is even stronger than their opposition to government. Skocpol and Williamson write,

> Above all, Tea Party activists see themselves as productive members of society. […] A well-marked distinction between workers and nonworkers – between productive citizens and the freeloaders – is central to the Tea Party worldview and conception of America. As Tea Partiers see it, only through hard work can one earn access to a good income and to honourable public benefits.[15]

Here I think we can see another important link with earlier forms of right-wing populism analysed by Horkheimer, Adorno and Löwenthal, namely, the ideology of producers and parasites.[16] We saw how this ideology figured prominently not only among right-wing populist agitators and authoritarian personalities, but also among anti-Semitic American workers. We also saw this ideology in the Nazis' distinction between the 'schaffend' and the 'raffend.' Horkheimer's analysis in 'Egoism and Freedom Movements' of the historical formation of dominant character structures in the modern bourgeois epoch, can still offer

us important insights into the origins and function of the ideology of producers and parasites. We are dealing here with an attitude that became widespread first among the ascendant bourgeoisie, but which was gradually imposed upon the lower classes as well, during the long, drawn-out process of integrating them into modern capitalist society.[17] The ideology of producers and parasites was used during the French Revolution to justify a revolt against the aristocracy, and it was taken over in the nineteenth century by some non-Marxian socialists to attack the bourgeoisie. But it also found its way easily into the Fascists' ideological arsenal.[18] This shift of the ideology of 'producers and parasites' is a prime example of the transformation of populism from the left to the right, which I discussed at the beginning of this paper in relation to Horkheimer's essay on 'Egoism and Freedom Movements.'

1.3.2. Right-Wing Populism from Above: Donald Trump

More recently, Donald Trump has succeeded in harnessing and expanding the right-wing populist movement, which exploded onto the political scene with the Tea Party.[19] In order to understand Trump's remarkable political success – despite the opposition of most of the party's traditional leadership – one needs to look more closely at some of the similarities and differences in his rhetoric and that of the Tea Party. In many regards, Trump has continued to emphasize key elements of Tea Party ideology. These include, for example, virulent and frequently conspiratorial denigration of President Obama;[20] celebration of the police and Second Amendment gun rights, combined with scathing attacks on the current government and government, in general; hyper-patriotic calls to restore the U.S. to a nostalgically imagined state of former greatness; and vitriolic denunciation of immigrants. Regarding the latter, Trump has – as in well known – gone well beyond the Tea Party in his call for the immediate deportation of over ten million undocumented workers, the revocation of citizenship for their children born in the U.S., and the construction of a wall along the Mexican border, which will prevent any further immigration and will allegedly be financed by the Mexican government. Trump's claim that many Mexican immigrants are murderers and rapists, combined with his reinforcement of the popular, prejudicial association of Muslims with terrorists, and his threat to severely limit Muslim immigration to the U.S., have demonstrated his willingness to outstrip even the Tea Party in xenophobic rhetorical excesses.[21] Another key area in which Trump has adopted and amplified Tea Party rhetoric is in regard to what Adorno called the 'usurpation complex.' Like the Tea Party, Trump constantly suggests that the government has been captured by special interests (for example, politicians beholden to lobbyists) and needs to be 'taken back' in order to properly serve the people. Trump emphasizes his status as an outsider, who is financing his own campaign rather than accepting any corrupting money from established special interest groups, and who is running for president only

because he is 'fed up' with the 'crooked system' that is destroying American democracy and thwarting the expression of the will of the people.[22] Trump repeatedly assures his audience that 'the last thing I ever thought I would do is become a politician.' But, in words that could have been taken verbatim from any number of the proto-fascist agitators studied by Löwenthal in the 1940s, Trump explains to his audience that he has decided reluctantly to enter politics, because the U.S. needs to get its house in order and that he is the perfect man for the job. He insists that his achievements as a wealthy businessman, successful real estate developer and tough negotiator are the ideal qualifications to 'make America great again.' Here one sees, even more clearly than in the Tea Party, Trump's appeal to those who believe that government should be run like a business and that political power should be placed in the hands of 'those who are actually in command of the machinery of production – not those who owe their ephemeral power to formal political processes,' as Adorno described the pseudo-conservative attitude towards government (Adorno et al. 1950, 676).

Trump has also adopted the rhetoric of 'producers and parasites,' which plays such a central role in Tea Party ideology. In fact, at a speech that Trump delivered at a Tea Party convention in South Carolina on 16 January 2016, he dedicated nearly half of his time to describing a project to build an ice-skating rink that he took over from the government of New York City, because it was behind schedule and over budget. He then boasted how, under his direction, the project was completed ahead of schedule and under budget, thereby contrasting his own productive efficiency to the wasteful incompetence of government.[23] Trump always describes his own professional activity as a real estate developer as contributing directly to the productivity of the U.S. by directly employing many thousands of people. Probably the single most important way in which Trump has set himself apart from other Republican candidates – particularly those of the party establishment – has been his embrace of economic populism and protectionism. He promises to make America powerful again by bringing back the hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs that have disappeared in the U.S. since the 1970s as a result of trade agreements like NAFTA, which have benefitted large corporations at the expense of American workers. Trump promises to punish corporations who choose to produce abroad by levying hefty tariffs on their products. He rails against government and corporate elites who have completely forgotten, or are against, 'wage earners.'[24] He has even promised to transform the Republican Party into a workers' party.[25] While many commentators have argued that Trump's xenophobia and racism appeal most to his constituents, other veteran scholars of American right-wing populism view his economic populism as more important.[26] The ideology of producers and parasites is also apparent in Trump's frequent criticisms of finance – in the form of 'paper-pushing' hedge fund managers – and banking. Trump repeatedly criticized his most serious challenger in the Republican primaries, Ted Cruz, for his willingness to take money from big Wall Street banks.[27] In contrast to Cruz and the rest of the Republican primary candidates, Trump never lets

his audience forget that he is financing his campaign with his own money. He even extends the rhetoric of producers and parasites to international military and trade relations. In his pledges prior to becoming president Trump promised to force countries like Germany, Japan and Saudi Arabia, which allegedly rely upon the largesse of the U.S. for their military defense, to either pay for this service or provide for their own defense. Similarly, in international trade, Trump points again and again to Mexico, and China, in particular, as deceiving the current naïve and/or inept American government and taking advantage of the American people by running large trade surpluses.

The final, but probably most important way in which Trump has adopted and intensified the rhetoric of the Tea Party lies in the cluster of ideas – discussed above – that Adorno refers to as 'pseudo-conservatism.' In order to explicitly link the key concept of pseudo-conservatism in *The Authoritarian Personality* to Horkheimer's earlier analyses of authoritarian tendencies among bourgeois freedom movements in the early modern period, it is worth recalling that Adorno views pseudo-conservatism as a deep historical tendency, which has accompanied the rise of modern capitalism as a whole, but whose expression is hindered or facilitated by the social and political conditions that exist in different periods within the modern bourgeois epoch.[28] To understand the recent success of the Tea Party and Trump, it is also worth recalling the reason why Adorno distinguished 'pseudo-' from genuine conservatives, namely, to contrast the authoritarian tendencies of the former to the more or less successful identification of the latter with the ideals of liberal democracy. According to Adorno, a crucial defining characteristic of the latter's acceptance of the 'anti-repressive and sincerely democratic' aspects of U.S. political ideals is an 'unqualified rejection of antiminority prejudice' (Adorno et al. 1950, 675). Adorno's prediction that 'the 'genuine' conservatives will be driven into the liberal camp by today's social dynamics,' seems to have been confirmed by the deep divisions that have emerged within the Republican Party in the past decade, with a rebellion first from the Tea Party and now – to an even greater extent – with Trump's open rebellion against traditional conservative elites within the party.[29] But now that the pseudo-conservative rebellion begun by the Tea Party and expanded by Trump has taken control of the Republican Party and placed their self-appointed leader in the White House, several high-ranking Republicans who have been very critical of Trump in the past – including the current Speaker of the House of Representatives, Paul Ryan and the 2012 Republican Presidential candidate, Mitt Romney – are already demonstrating a greater willingness to work with Trump.[30]

If one asks how Trump's rhetoric reflects the content of pseudo-conservatism, as described by Adorno, many continuities with the points outlined above in relation to the Tea Party are readily apparent. But one also sees what I would like to argue is the biggest difference between Trump and the Tea Party, namely, Trump's much more explicitly authoritarian rhetoric and self-presentation. Whereas the Tea Party still prided itself on being a grassroots, decentralized

movement, Trump has given the movement a new centralized focus with his pompous and aggressive leadership. Adorno describes the desire of pseudo-conservatives for authoritarian leadership in the following way:

> Their idea of the strong man […] is colored by an image of real strength; the backing of the most powerful industrial groups. To them, progressives in the government are the real usurpers […] because they assume a power position which should be reserved for the 'right people.' Pseudoconservatives have an underlying sense of 'legitimacy': legitimate rulers are those who are actually in command of the machinery of production – not those who owe their ephemeral power to formal political processes […] Formal democracy seems to this kind of thinking to be too far away from 'the people,' and the people will have their right only if the 'inefficient' democratic processes are substituted by some rather ill-defined strong-arm system (Adorno et al. 1950, 677–78, 686).

Although Trump is not himself an industrialist – which may itself be of less significance in a 'post-industrial' period – he certainly presents himself as a productive and efficient businessman with an intimate understanding of 'how to get things done' in the 'real world' of the economy, and as someone who will apply these methods in order 'to make America great again.' Although there has been a debate among scholars and journalists about whether Trump is more authoritarian or populist, this debate overlooks the fact that right-wing populism and authoritarianism very often go hand in hand, as the experience of European fascism in the 1920s and 1930s made clear.[31] This is not to say, as other commentators have claimed, that Trump is an outright fascist himself. Although his calls for the deportation of over ten million undocumented workers and his threats to use violence – and tolerance of it among his followers – against his enemies and opponents certainly places his rhetoric well within fascist traditions, he has not called for the overthrow of U.S. political institutions and he has yet to form his own anti-democratic political party or militias – although a number of militant far-right and/or white supremacist groups have expressed their support for him.[32]

However, Trump and many of his followers do fit the mould of authoritarian right-wing populism – that is, what Adorno described as 'pseudo-conservatism' – very well. And as Adorno kept repeating until his death in 1969, the threat of authoritarianism in modern capitalist societies that comes from *within* democracy is probably greater than the threat posed by explicitly anti-democratic movements.[33] In *The Authoritarian Personality* Adorno describes this threat in the following way:

> It cannot be disputed that formal democracy, under the present economic system, does not suffice to guarantee permanently, to the bulk of the population, satisfaction of the most elementary wants and

needs, whereas at the same time the democratic form of government is presented as if [...] it were as close to an ideal society as it could be. The resentment caused by this contradiction is turned by those who fail to recognize its economic roots against the form of democracy itself. Because it does not fulfill what it promises, they regard it as a 'swindle' and are ready to exchange it for a system which sacrifices all claims to human dignity and justice, but of which they expect vaguely some kind of guarantee of their lives by better planning and organization (Adorno et al. 1950, 678).

Trump plays on this type of populist, anti-political resentment, when he states repeatedly in his speeches that the current political system is corrupt, but that he as an individual possesses the wherewithal not only to reverse America's lamentable decline, but to do so quickly: 'You need somebody fast,' and 'it's gonna go fast,' and 'I alone can fix this problem,' as he told a huge audience at a speech on 10 April 2016 in Rochester, New York – a city decimated by post-industrial decline. Trump's message of economic protectionism, which sets him apart from other Republican candidates and from the neo-liberal ideology of American conservative elites more generally, is tailor-made for predominantly white, lower and lower-middle class audiences, such as the one he was addressing in Rochester. Not unlike the National Socialists' promises to restore a powerful *Volksgemeinschaft*,[34] Trump tells his listeners to join his 'movement' to restore a mythical United States in which we will 'protect and love one another.' Trump rails against big banks and corporate lobbyists and tells his audience that he is 'the only one who will save social security.'[35] Here again we can see Trump very perceptively placing himself on the side of the grassroots activists in the Tea Party, and against the neoliberalism of conservative elites, such as the Koch Brothers and Paul Ryan, who favoured the privatization of Social Security. So Trump has appropriated the communitarian elements of the Tea Party ideology, while at the same time intensifying them, by combining them with his own appeal as an authoritarian leader who allegedly possesses the power to enact them and to punish those 'enemies of the people' – both domestic and foreign – who are responsible for America's decline.

1.4. Conclusion

One reason why Fascism has a chance is that in the name of progress its opponents treat it as a historical norm. The current amazement that the things we are experiencing are 'still' possible in the twentieth century is *not* philosophical. This amazement is not the beginning of knowledge – unless it is the knowledge that the view of history which gives rise to it is untenable.[36]

— Walter Benjamin

These words that Benjamin wrote in the face of the undiminished appeal and continuing advance of fascism in Europe in the late 1930s, can still illuminate dominant, unreflective historical attitudes of the twenty-first century that have led to a significant underestimation of the threat – and consequent surprise about the actual rise – of right-wing populism in Europe and the United States. As we have seen, Horkheimer, Fromm, Adorno, and Löwenthal grounded their analyses of fascism, authoritarianism, and right-wing populism in a historical theory of the modern bourgeois epoch as a whole. The provocative thesis of Horkheimer's path-breaking essay, 'Egoism and Freedom Movements' – which provided the historical and theoretical foundations for much of the Institute's later work on authoritarianism – was that the particular social and social-psychological dynamics that led to fascism in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s had been present from the beginning of modern bourgeois society. To be sure, the constellation of social relations between the aristocracy, middle, and lower classes underwent a transformation as the bourgeoisie gradually established its hegemony over a period of centuries. It was not until this *dialectic of bourgeois society* had reached its later stages that fascism became an objective possibility, and then a catastrophic historical reality.[37] In contrast to many 'progressive' and 'evolutionary' theorists in the post-WWII period, who attributed the success of fascism in Germany and Italy to a *Sonderweg* – that is, a 'modernization deficit' in comparison to other Western democracies – Horkheimer and the Critical Theorists recognized that fascism had sprung from some of the deepest and most powerful tendencies slumbering in modern capitalist societies and that these tendencies had not been removed by the unconditional surrender of fascists in 1945. Adorno's reformulation of Kant's categorical imperative in the 1960s – 'unfree mankind [must] arrange their thoughts and actions so that Auschwitz will not repeat itself, so that nothing similar will happen' – expressed his conviction that, even within post-war liberal democracies, such tendencies still existed. Even if one questions claims – as I do – that the Tea Party, or even the more explicitly authoritarian Donald Trump can be described as 'Fascist,' the Critical Theorists' insight that fascism represents an extreme form of the right-wing populist tendencies that have deep roots in modern capitalist societies, provides a very important corrective to the naïve and ahistorical approaches to right-wing populism and authoritarianism, which have been caught off-guard by their recent reemergence in the United States. Critical Theory offers a much more incisive explanation than such ahistorical approaches of the (not so) surprising *persistence* of right-wing populism into the twenty-first century.

Examples of the historically naïve approach can be found in a number of recent journalistic essays on Trump which describe the recent 'rediscovery' of authoritarianism among American academic social scientists. Rather than exploring the merits and demerits of this social scientific literature here, I would like simply to make note of the remarkably blithe dismissal of the entire corpus of the Critical Theorists' studies of authoritarianism. For example, in March, 2016 Amanda Taub published a widely discussed article in the online political

journal *Vox*, which explored this new body of work on authoritarianism and its implications for understanding the surprising success of Donald Trump. Her giddy confidence in the forward march of progress in the social sciences comes through clearly in the following statements: 'after a period of junk science in the mid-twentieth century, a more serious group of scholars has addressed this question, specifically studying how it plays out in American politics.' Eliminating any doubt about the culprits in question, Taub continues:

> …the early work wasn't particularly rigorous by today's standards. The critical theorist Theodor Adorno, for instance, developed what he called the 'F-scale,' which sought to measure fascist tendencies. The test wasn't accurate. Sophisticated respondents would quickly discover what the 'right' answers were and game the test. And there was no proof that the personality type it purportedly measured actually supported fascism (Taub 2016).

Fortunately for us, however:

> …in the early 1990s, a political scientist named Stanley Feldman changed everything. […] He realized that if authoritarianism was a personality profile rather than just a political preference, he could get respondents to reveal these tendencies by asking questions about a topic that seemed much less controversial: […] parenting goals (Taub 2016).

Taub's characterizations here are not unusual; one finds very similar claims in a number of recent articles on authoritarianism and Trump. Unfortunately they reflect nothing more than current misconceptions about the Institute's sophisticated and substantial studies of authoritarianism. Many of the supposed shortcomings of their work mentioned by Taub and others were, in fact, integral parts of the methods they used. For example, the alleged discovery in more recent work of attitudes towards child rearing as a key indicator of authoritarianism was employed in many of the Institute's studies.[38] One need not refute the foolish claim that the Institute viewed authoritarianism as a political preference rather than a complex constellation of character traits, since this was the most basic working hypothesis of *The Authoritarian Personality*. Also, Adorno and other Institute members never made the mistake of assuming that authoritarianism coincided in any simple way with 'left' and 'right,' or 'liberal' and 'conservative' political views, as the discussion above of pseudo-conservatism should have made clear. The Critical Theorists' discussion of 'conformist rebellion,' motivated by ego weakness, rather than critical insight, is another example – this time of a 'pseudo-critical' stance. Finally, from very early on, they clearly recognized the need to obtain empirical information about authoritarianism indirectly, to avoid self-censorship among respondents. Their psychoanalytic expertise aided them greatly in developing increasingly refined techniques of

gaining access not just to the openly professed, but also to the private or even unconscious attitudes of participants in their studies.[39]

The reemergence of a powerful right-wing populist movement in the U.S. in the wake of the Great Recession of 2008, and more recent expansion of that pseudo-conservative movement and the intensification of the authoritarian aspects of its rhetoric, should be a signal to recover the Critical Theorists' important insights into the roots of authoritarian populism in modern capitalist societies, which can still contribute greatly to explaining its *persistence* from the twentieth into the twenty-first century. The most common reaction of contemporary, historically myopic social science to the Tea Party and especially Donald Trump's success has been embarrassed surprise. The reemergence of right-wing populism – first in Europe and now in the U.S. – during the consolidation and, more recently, the crisis of global neo-liberal capitalism, will hardly come as a surprise to anyone familiar with the Critical Theorists' studies of authoritarianism. But, for a variety of reasons, the memory of these studies has weakened substantially in the present. The attempt by more recent theorists in Germany – who proudly place themselves in the 'Frankfurt School' tradition, while at the same time often dismissing the contemporary relevance of its founders – to place Critical Theory on firm 'normative' foundations, has diverted attention from real, existing catastrophic tendencies.[40] Like the utopian socialists of old, the normative theorists think they can tell us the way society *ought* to be developing, but they are at a loss to explain why it is actually moving in the opposite direction. As we have seen, Horkheimer and his colleagues were convinced that the threat of authoritarianism was minimal in the immediate post-war period, and the economic prosperity and relative security of the 1950s and 1960s continued to dampen the threat. But rising levels of inequality, frustration and anxiety since the 1970s have created conditions much more favourable to right-wing populist movements. So even if the memory of the Critical Theorists' studies of authoritarianism and right-wing populism has become weak, we should seize hold of it as it flashes up in this moment of danger.

Notes

[1] This essay was completed in February 2017 and thus does not take into account political developments since then.

[2] For Adorno's own account of his 'scientific experiences' in the U.S., see Adorno (1969).

[3] 'Fascism was not a coincidence.' Adorno made this state in his 'Lectures on Aesthetics' 30 November 1967 (Kraushaar 1998, 328).

[4] Horkheimer's analysis here of the transformation of populism anticipates more recent historical scholarship on the relationship between fascism and populism by scholars such as Peter Fritzsche, Geoff Eley, Ernesto Laclau and Zeev Sternhell. For a discussion of this scholarship and its

reconceptualization of the relationship between populism and fascism, see (Abromeit 2016).

[5] Gustave Le Bon's *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, which was first published in 1895, is an excellent example of this larger tendency. Le Bon presents himself here as a modern-day Machiavelli, who has written a practical political handbook for conservative elites in order to instruct them on how to manipulate the masses in order to maintain their own power. It is not a coincidence that Mussolini was an avid reader and admirer of Le Bon's work.

[6] 'Forwards with God for King and Fatherland' to 'For the German People'

[7] For a more detailed discussion of this scholarship, see the reference in note 3, above.

[8] For one classical account of this shift, see (Polanyi 1944).

[9] For a discussion of the shift in Horkheimer's Critical Theory that occurred around 1940 as a result of his adoption of Pollock's state capitalism thesis, see (Postone and Brick 1993). See also, for a somewhat different interpretation of this shift: (Abromeit 2011, 394–424).

[10] For a more detailed discussion of the Institute's study of anti-Semitism among American workers, see (Worrell 2008) and (Ziege 2009, 180–228).

[11] Adorno referred to the United States as a 'radically bourgeois country' in (Adorno 1977, 310). For an examination of the much more significant role that racism played in the formation of 'white' identities among the American working class in the United States – identities that also had decidedly bourgeois characteristics – see (Abromeit 2013a).

[12] For an overview of Fromm's writings in the 1930s on the social-psychological dimensions of authoritarianism, see (Abromeit 2011, 201–11, 282–88).

[13] Stanford political scientist Adam Bonica has argued that the House of Representatives experienced its most pronounced ideological shift to the right as a result of the elections of 2010 – more radical even than after the so-called 'Republican Revolution' led by Newt Gingrich in 1994. See (Skocpol and Williams 2012, 168–70).

[14] On the Tea Party's very selective, and tendentially fundamentalist interpretation of the U.S. constitution, see (Jill Lepore 2010, especially 118–25).

[15] (Skocpol and Williams 2012, 65–66). These beliefs can also be observed at Tea Party rallies, where participants carry placards saying 'Redistribute my work ethic,' or 'Keep working; thousands on welfare are depending on you.'

[16] On the importance of the 'producers and parasites' ideology for the Tea Party, see also (Formisano 2012, 20).

[17] For an analysis of the ways in which this process was different in the U.S. from Europe, due to the presence of a large Black underclass, see also (Abromeit 2013a).

[18] For a more detailed analysis of the transformation of the populist ideology of 'producers and parasites' from the left to the right in Europe in the period from the French Revolution to fascism, see (Abromeit 2016).

[19] The following analysis of Trump focuses on the rhetorical strategies Trump developed during his campaign. An analysis of the ways in which Trump has – since winning the election – distanced himself from some of the more outlandish of these claims, cannot be pursued here, since this process is still underway at the time of writing.

[20] Donald Trump was one of the first to question Obama's citizenship and he actively participated in the so-called 'birther' movement.

[21] On Trump's willingness to violate tabus maintained by traditional conservatives, see (Perlstein 2015).

[22] See, for example, the speech Trump delivered in Rochester, New York on 10 April 2016, which can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqRMaD3HWHo .

[23] Trump's speech can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-zN5k4Gu40.

[24] In the speech Trump gave in Rochester in April 2016, cited in note 22.

[25] As reported in the online journal *Politico*, on May 26, 2016: http://www.politico.com/story/2016/05/trump-gop-workers-party-223598.

[26] For an argument that emphasizes Trump's economic populism, see (Frank 2016).

[27] Here, the right-wing populist echo of Bernie Sanders' left-wing populist criticisms of Hillary Clinton is unmistakable.

[28] Adorno argues, for example, that 'The reason that the pseudo-conservative seems to be such a characteristically modern phenomenon is not that any new psychological element has been added to this particular syndrome, which was probably established during the last four centuries, but that objective social conditions make it easier for the character structure in question to express itself in its avowed opinions' (Adorno et al. 1950, 676).

[29] Prior to Trump's capturing the nomination of the Republican Party and, now, the Presidency, many powerful Republican Party elites, such as George H.W. Bush, George W. Bush and Mitt Romney, as well as some of the wealthiest donors to the Party, such as the Koch Brothers, refused to support Trump.

[30] During the 2016 primary, Trump created a sort of litmus test that forced Republicans to identify with him, as a pseudo-conservative, or against him, as a genuine conservative. But the fact that most of them have in the mean time demonstrated more willingness to work with Trump seems to cast doubt on Adorno's argument here, that conservative elites' commitments to liberal-democratic principles would lead them to reject pseudo-conservatives and gravitate towards moderate liberals.

[31] For one example of a critique of numerous articles that have analyzed Trump as an authoritarian, see (Rahn and Oliver 2016).

[32] On Trump's support among the extreme right, white supremacists and neo-Nazis in the U.S., see (Holley and Larimer 2016).

[33] As Adorno famously put it in 1959, 'I consider the survival of National Socialism *within* democracy to be potentially more menacing than the survival of fascist tendencies *against* democracy' (Adorno 1998, 90).

[34] On the importance of the concept of the *Volksgemeinschaft* ('people's community') to Nazi ideology, see (Fritzsche 1998).

[35] As Trump stated in his April, 2016 speech in Rochester, cited in note 22 above.

[36] (Benjamin 1968, 257).

[37] For a discussion of the concept of the 'dialectic of bourgeois society,' which I have coined as a description of certain key historical and theoretical assumptions that guide Horkheimer's early work, see (Abromeit 2011, 4, 394–95, 425–32).

[38] Already in the Institute's first major empirical study – its study of the attitudes of blue and white collar workers in Weimar Germany – Horkheimer and Fromm included questions about child rearing as indirect indicators of manifest or latent authoritarianism. In their major empirical project, the *Studies on Authority and Family*, attitudes toward child rearing once again were central, as the title suggests. In later studies it played a role as well, but the Critical Theorists were far too sophisticated to believe that attitudes towards child rearing alone sufficed to provide reliable indications of authoritarian predispositions.

[39] For a discussion of these techniques, see (Abromeit 2013b).

[40] For a more detailed elaboration of this critique of normative approaches, to Critical Theory in the face of right-wing populism see (Abromeit 2017).

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The Persistence of the Authoritarian Appeal: On Critical Theory as a Framework for Studying Populist Actors in European Democracies

Lars Rensmann

2.1. Introduction: Populist and Authoritarian Politics in the Twenty-first Century

The rise of illiberal, authoritarian populist candidates, parties and movements has profoundly unsettled liberal democracies across the globe. This process is epitomized by Donald Trump's ascendancy – firstly by serving as the candidate of the Republican Party, then to the American presidency – and by dramatic gains of populist contenders in Europe in recent years. They pretend to oppose 'the establishment' and propose nationalist and authoritarian policies in the name of 'the people' – or rather a very particular, narrow ethnic conception thereof. In light of the scope and depth of the cultural backlash which these actors mobilize and represent, there are few indicators that the success of populist actors is a passing phenomenon, or just signifying temporary 'protest votes' (Inglehart and Norris 2016). No longer are illiberal, authoritarian populist voices relegated to the political margins. Instead, authoritarian demagogues,

who often invoke in Schmittian language claims to a 'true democracy' based on ethnic substrates, have by now consolidated as serious challengers to democratic politics and systems as such, and the hard-fought societal achievements which they embody.[1] Thriving on political polarizations and crises of democratic legitimacy, these authoritarians have reached the centre of political life and debate in European democracies and beyond, from the AfD in Germany to the PVV in the Netherlands, from the Front National in France to the Lega Nord in Italy, from Hungary's Fidesz to the FPÖ in Austria (see Abromeit et al. 2015; Mudde 2007). Their electoral success and rising leverage raise fundamental questions about the origins, dynamics, and attraction of this political phenomenon today – but also about the persistence or recurrence of an authoritarian appeal even *within* constitutional democracies.[2]

Against this backdrop, this chapter argues that it is worth revisiting the Frankfurt School's Critical Theory because it provides a resource to develop and reconstruct a framework for the study of contemporary populism.[3] The Frankfurt School, I suggest, still has much to offer to explain the force of the authoritarian populist agitators and their attraction. Illuminating the multifaceted potential of Frankfurt School Critical Theory for theorizing and interpreting the political psychology of contemporary authoritarian populist mobilizations, I will primarily point to three paths or directions. In so doing, I turn especially to various writings on the subject of authoritarian and antisemitic politics published by Adorno and Löwenthal in and since the 1940s.[4] They point to socially generated, persistent socio-psychological dispositions of authoritarianism in modern societies; the significance of authoritarian politics and political propaganda in actualizing and mobilizing those dispositions; and to the societal conditions and underpinnings that can help enable the resurgent success of authoritarian, nationalist and populist appeals within democratic societies in post-Holocaust Europe and beyond. Employing the initially pathbreaking work of Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School's empirical study of authoritarian demagogues within modern democracies thereby constitutes, I suggest, an important element to better understand both the societal undercurrents and foundations, as well as political and psychological dynamics of authoritarian politics – and their resurgence, or persistent potential, in political modernity (Rensmann and Gandesha 2012).

In the following text, I will take three steps towards a reconstruction of a critical theory of authoritarian politics, which grounds a framework for studying contemporary populist actors in European democracies. Drawing connections to current populist demand, I will first turn to the Frankfurt School's specific theorizing of modern authoritarianism and the 'authoritarian syndrome.' Secondly, in view of contemporary right-wing populist actors in Europe I will explore features, standardized mechanisms, and dynamics of authoritarian demagoguery – as presented by original Critical Theory – that mobilize and actualize persistent authoritarian undercurrents.[5] Thirdly, I will point to social theory models about the dialectics of objectification, fetishization, and social

domination advanced by Adorno, as well as Horkheimer's racket theory – understood as potential elements for a reconstructed theory of authoritarian politics of unreason in our time.

I will conclude by suggesting some general implications of the Frankfurt School's work for examining current forms of authoritarian politics and right-wing populism under conditions of contemporary European democracies.

2.2. The Authoritarian Revolt: On the Resilient Lure and Social Psychology of Authoritarianism

A first path is a close re-reading of the features Adorno and others identified as constitutive for the authoritarian syndrome. It suggests that there are strong affinities between this diagnosed syndrome, on the one hand, and the expressions, dispositions, actions, and aggressions articulated among populist crowds, voters, and supporters, on the other hand – as well as publicly among populist demagogues themselves (on social media and elsewhere). At issue are for Adorno shared qualities of an ideal type, the internal network of associations that makes up an 'authoritarian personality,' exhibiting a 'relatively rigid, unchanging structure that appears time and again and is everywhere the same,' in contrast to the 'free human being, who is not blindly tied to authority' (Adorno and Horkheimer 1975, 367 and 361). To capture and describe this structural disposition as an individual and widespread social phenomenon, Adorno also deliberately uses the terms 'anti-democratic syndrome' and 'prejudiced personality.' These terms indicate that Adorno theorizes, and tries to measure, an underlying organization displaying ego weakness, lack of integration of the drives and lack of self-reflection, and a hardly internalized superego or conscience. It points to a psychosocial framework, a context within which – to varying degrees and in various forms – particular personality structures crystalize. Adorno's model claims that there is a structural, general disposition to hatred of democracy, modernity, non-conformity, societal difference, Others, of those who 'deviate from the norm.' Even though Adorno also uses at times 'the anti-Semite' interchangeably with 'the authoritarian,' the model is not, first and foremost, about particular prejudices, resentments, and ideologies – though there are clear susceptibilities – but the underlying susceptibility to prejudiced thinking, anti-democratic behavior, and hate speech.

Even if we leave aside for a moment the contested psychoanalytic assumptions and theoretical undercurrents about the nature of this syndrome, nine key features of this syndrome which Adorno identifies seem consistently present if we analyse current populist crowds, and interviews and surveys of populist voters:

1. *rigid conventionality*, that is, the unreflective attachment to social norms and dictates, and conformism that produces anxiety at the appearance of any social deviation' (Silbermann 1981, 40);

2. *authoritarian submissiveness*, i.e. the 'uncritical attitude toward idealized moral authorities of the ingroup' (Adorno et al. 1950, 248), measured, like conventionality, by support of statements like 'obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn.' (Adorno et al. 1950, 231, 248);

3. *authoritarian aggressivity*, that is the tendency to seek, condemn and punish anyone who violates conformist morality or authoritarian norms, as measured by support of claims like 'sex crimes, such as rape and attacks on children, deserve more than mere imprisonment; such criminals ought to be publicly whipped, or worse.' (Adorno et al. 1950, 240, 248, 250);

4. the *lack of intraception* and 'opposition to the subjective, the imaginative, the tender-minded' (Adorno et al. 1950, 249), as well as unqualified coldness and narrowness with regard to emotions and social questions, as expressed in statements such as 'One main trouble today is that people talk too much and work too little';

5. infatuation with *power and toughness*, coinciding with individual feelings of powerlessness, that is, the preoccupation with a 'dominance-submission, strong-weak, leader-follower dimension,' reflected for instance in agreement with the statement 'most people don't realize how much our lives are controlled by plots hatched in secret by politicians' (Adorno et al. 1950, 249, 250) and 'people can be divided in two distinct classes: the weak and the strong' (Adorno et al. 1950, 249);

6. *destructiveness paired with cynicism*, disclosing an underlying, 'generalized hostility, vilification of the human' (Adorno et al. 1950, 249), measured through support of claims such as 'the true American way of life is disappearing so fast that force may be necessary to preserve it' (Adorno et al. 1950, 250);

7. stereotypical, '*stereopathic' thinking*, combined with an incapacity for self-critical reflection and feelings of solidarity;

8. linked to that *projectivity*, i.e. the 'disposition to believe that wild and dangerous things go on in the world,' 'the projection outward of unconscious emotional impulses,' (Adorno et al. 1950, 250–51) and susceptibility to prejudice, manipulation, and narcissistic valorisation;

9. *fixation on sexuality*, expressed in an exaggerated concern with anything sexual. The correlation of both anti-Semitism and (racist) ethnocentrism with these features, characterizing the F-scale, prove to be particularly prominent according to Adorno, but also point to the susceptibility to collective self-aggrandizement and social paranoia (the social origins and psychological micro-dynamics of authoritarian dispositions I have discussed elsewhere).

What is striking about this, to name just one contemporary empirical reference, is shown in a 2016 study of core Trump supporters (one year before the November election). Matthew MacWilliams has demonstrated in a statistical

analysis that only one trait predicts if you are a Trump supporter, and it is not class, race, or age but: *authoritarianism*. It is measured by MacWilliams in four questions pertaining to child rearing that could have been written by Adorno, including: whether it is 'more important for the voter to have a child who is respectful or independent; obedient or self-reliant; well-behaved or considerate; and well-mannered or curious' (MacWilliams 2016; Pettigrew 2017). Moreover, qualitative analyses indicate that many or most of the measured statements are present, recurring, and highly frequent among core voters and likely voters of authoritarian populists in Europe, U.S., and among Erdogan supporters living in the EU – without even the need to adopt questionnaires and measures in place since the 1940s (Wodak 2015; Inglehart and Norris 2016; Pettigrew 2017).

Of particular relevance for understanding and theorizing the new authoritarian populism is Adorno's analytic description of the features of the authoritarian 'rebel,' as part of the Frankfurt School's theory of authoritarianism. Contemporary populist mobilizations thrive on 'breaking the rules,' ridiculing civilizational democratic norms and standards as 'taboos,' and expressing a conformist 'rebellion' against the 'liberal elite.' This resurgence points to what Adorno conceived as the 'rebellious' type, who is ready for an authoritarian revolt or anti-liberal, anti-democratic counter-revolution. His revolt is directed against social value change as well as established authorities and orders perceived as weak – with the goal to replace such authority while 'rehabilitating' certain conformist ideals and repressive, exclusionary group norms. The type or syndrome of authoritarian rebellion may be of particular importance as a tool to describe and understand the current populist crowd(s). In this case, authoritarian aggression is discharged in a markedly free and unsublimated form, provided that it is legitimized by new, apparently stronger authority figures who take the place of the old authorities. The theory of authoritarian rebellion describes an authoritarian admixture of conformism and revolt: a rebellion is carried out against societal authority figures – sometimes against the State itself. The rebellion might come about because the established authority is suddenly unable to radiate the strength that was once both admired and feared, the power to create order and to clamp down. This process of replacing one authority with another, Adorno maintains, is 'facilitated by the "externalized" superego structure' that is common to all prejudiced individuals (Adorno et al. 1950, 762). The rebel syndrome, the type Adorno also calls the 'Tough Guy,' is viewed as less rigid than the 'conventional' authoritarian:

Here, the superego seems to have been completely crippled through the outcome of the Oedipus conflict, by means of a retrogression to the omnipotence fantasy of very early infancy. These individuals are the most 'infantile' of all: they have thoroughly failed to 'develop,' have not been moulded at all by civilization. They are 'asocial.' Destructive urges come to the fore in an overt, non-rationalized way … Their indulgence in persecution is crudely sadistic, directed against any helpless victim; it is unspecific and hardly coloured by 'prejudice' (Adorno et al. 1950, 763).[6]

'The more conciliatory and weak authority appeared,' Erich Fromm argued when he first identified this type in the Weimar Republic, 'the more grew their hatred and disdain' (Fromm 1984, 226). While identification with the existing order is, in most cases, a component of authoritarianism, Fromm argues that the usual authoritarian assent to the status quo and to those in power can be revoked if the existing societal authority is partly democratized and thus fails to fulfill the expectation of implacable hardness: 'Many intermediate steps lead from this type of rebel to the individual who abandons the current authority figure, only to submit, simultaneously, to a new authority … Often … the cause lies in the fact that the existing authority has forfeited its defining quality of absolute power and superiority, and in so doing, inevitably loses its psychological function' (Fromm 1993, 129; trans. Kizer Walker). New authorities and ideologies that replace the old satisfy 'two needs at the same time – rebellious tendencies and the latent longing for comprehensive submission' (Fromm 1984, 227). Affect control through the agency of the super-ego appears particularly tenuous in the case of the authoritarian rebel, while the sadistic, destructive and distorted strivings of the id, that stand in contrast to established civil norms, are especially intense – apt abruptly and flagrantly to erupt, they are held in check only by external power but can also be mobilized by admired group leaders who encourage and help unleash precisely such social transgressions. They seem especially driven and attracted by fantasies of unmitigated violence against those representing social difference and freedom, the despised 'weak' and 'corrupt elite,' intellectuals, media, religious or ethnic minorities, Jews; against the many constraints of civilization, constitutional democracy, and modernity. The diehard, incorrigible believers and hard core of today's authoritarian populist's followers, particularly enjoying rebellious acts of social transgression, indeed often seem to represent rebellious tough guy types aiming at an *authoritarian revolt*.

'It is hardly adequate,' Adorno insists to be sure, 'to define the forces of fascist rebellion simply as powerful id energies which throw off the pressure of the existing social order. Rather, this rebellion borrows its energies partly from other psychological agencies which are pressed into the service of the unconscious' (Adorno 2001, 137). Adorno alludes here to the ostensibly 'civilizing' agencies, the ego and the super-ego, which impart societal constraints to the individual. Authoritarian destructive energies, in this view, are also a product of the surplus repressions of a civilizing process that remains entangled in unreflective social domination.

2.3. The Appeal of the Agitator: Understanding Authoritarian Politics and Mobilizations in Democracies

This leads me to a second, arguably most interesting path for the reconstruction of a critical theory of contemporary populism after Adorno. The strikingly

recurring elements of the anti-democratic syndrome in virtual and actual populist crowds (or multitudes) and individuals – understood as a disposition towards projectivity, aggression, and submission – and the potential for an authoritarian revolt find an outlet in populist propaganda and politics 2.0. To an understanding of their political-psychological dynamics Adorno's and Löwenthal's empirical works may have the most to offer. In particular, they studied the patterns, techniques, and standardized tropes employed by authoritarian demagogues in order to mobilize support among audiences – Adorno, like Arendt, would have employed the old-fashioned and somewhat problematic notion of 'the mass' and 'masses' – within (American) democracy. Adorno asks how these mobilizations are preconditioned and how they operate.

The main argument is that such mobilization is about unleashing anti-civilizational discontent and offering psychological gains. It is not about material gains and better or different or more just policies, as many left-wing critics believe, but delusions of socio-psychological origins that defy facts, issues of material well-being, and the better argument – the more apparent the lies and untruth of the argument, the harder they stick to the delusion. The authoritarian revolt that populist demagogues seek to stir and feed is catering top-down to bottom-up social resentments against 'Others,' conspiracy myths explaining a complex modern social world and its malaise, and diffuse opposition to the 'establishment' and liberal democracy. It primarily appeals to secret or forbidden wishes, desires and fantasies as it reinforces social fears; no matter how far such psychological needs are also engendered by, and objectified expressions of, economic conditions and material insecurity. Rather than striving toward rational programs, all forms of demagogy trade in resentment and home in on anxieties and unconscious emotions, which they aim to intensify: 'The movement is presented as a value *per se*, because it is understood that movement implies violence, oppression of the weak, and exhibition of one's own power' (Adorno 2000, 32).

In Critical Theory's understanding, many of the psycho-technologies of authoritarian demagoguery thus remain uniform across the most disparate political conditions. While their effectiveness and impact may vary strongly depending on different political contexts and cultures, the standardized techniques tend largely to be the same everywhere. They are best understood, as Löwenthal aptly puts it, as 'psychoanalysis in reverse' (Löwenthal cited in Jay 1973, 173). They apprehend psychological dispositions. But rather than illuminating, they obscure and exacerbate them. Horkheimer and Adorno argue that 'unchanneled longing is guided into racial-nationalist rebellion' (Horkheimer and Adorno 1969, 144). Although 'the mentality of the fascist agitator resembles somewhat the muddle-headedness of his prospective followers and … the leaders themselves 'are hysterical or even paranoid types,' Adorno argues, such authoritarian propaganda is 'by no means altogether irrational' (Adorno 1994, 130). Neither the 'structural similarity of followers and leader,' nor the agitator's 'own neurotic or psychotic dispositions' prevent him from consciously planning

his agitation. The agitator is fully capable, Adorno insists, of employing his 'own neurotic or psychotic dispositions for ends which are wholly adapted to the principle of reality […] The fascist agitator is usually a masterly salesman of his own psychological defects' (Adorno 1994, 130). Let me address five of these dynamic features that can also be detected in current populism.

First, Adorno insists, *the method, the "how", is more important than the contents, the "what"* (Adorno 2000, 28; emphasis in original). A principal method of such propaganda is the endless repetition of an extremely limited inventory of themes (Adorno 2001, 148), standardized answers to the social discontent and psychosocial deprivations of potential followers. A key element of addressing problems and discontent is by the recurring method of *personification*. When the agitator raises the question of the cause of social problems, his answer, as Löwenthal notes, invariably indicates a '*who*,' rather than a '*what*' (Löwenthal 1987, 21; emphasis in original). Every social phenomenon is reified, and every anonymous, complex social process or structure is personalized and ethnicized – and thus also simplified.

Appealing to and mobilizing emotions, political demagoguery can satisfy demands for group narcissism and superiority by denigrating or demonizing Others. Personification is consistently paired with dehumanization of the alleged 'enemies of the people.' In addition to, most prominently, 'the Jews' (or coded terms hinting at them) as the force of all presumed evil in the world foreigners and refugees are charged with the image of the enemy. Löwenthal argues that for 'the agitator, the refugee is the most fearsome version of the foreigner. The very weakness, the very plight of the refugees is an argument against them … The refugee becomes identified with the parasite who seeks dupes to do his dirty work' (Löwenthal 1987, 59). 'In portraying the enemy as ruthless,' Löwenthal adds, 'the agitator prepares the ground for neutralizing whatever predispositions for sympathy for the underdog his audience of underdogs may feel' (Löwenthal 1987, 82).

The pleasure of excluding and discriminating bolsters narcissistic aggrandizement and, second, through identification with the group a 'delusion-like security' (Adorno et al, 1950: 619). When the agitator offers 'a sense of belonging, no matter how counterfeit it is,' Löwenthal explains:

> …his words find response only because men today feel homeless and need a new belief in the possibility of social harmony and well-being. And when he calls upon them to depend on him, he capitalizes on both their *revolt against the restraints of civilization* and their longing for some new symbol of authority. That which they utter under their breaths, the sub rosa thoughts that they are hardly ready to acknowledge to themselves become the themes flaunted in agitation. What the agitator does, then, is to activate the most primitive and immediate, the most inchoate and dispersed reactions of his followers to the general trends of contemporary society (Löwenthal 1987, 151).

An 'enlargement of the subject's own personality, a collective projection of himself' (Adorno 2001, 140) allows him to take part in the power that lifts him up. The 'narcissistic *gain* provided by fascist propaganda,' Adorno argues, 'is obvious. It suggests continuously and sometimes in rather devious ways, that the follower, simply through belonging to the in-group, is better, higher and purer than those who are excluded. At the same time, any kind of critique or self-awareness is resented as a narcissistic loss, and elicits rage. It accounts for the violent reaction of all fascists against what they deem *zersetzend*, that which debunks their own stubbornly maintained values, and it also explains the hostility of prejudiced persons against any kind of introspection' (Adorno 2001).

Thus, third, the demagogue helps create a political climate that reinforces and promotes prejudice and anxiety (real or irrational), and encourages transgressions of political norms. To suspend existing rational and moral limitations, articulating and legitimizing anti-civilizational, anti-humanitarian transgressions – hence the lack of introspection and self-reflection – is part of the lure. This is why excessive vulgarity, displaying aggressive hypermasculinity and uninhibited sexual prowess, and mocking minorities often do not alienate core voters. Rather, certain bold transgressions of social norms are part of the agitator's very attraction. Popular stereotypes, writes Löwenthal, are 'inadequate representations of reality' that might potentially 'serve as starting points for analysis of the economic and political situations,' as confused points of departure toward a more complex understanding of social reality. Instead, authoritarian agitation employs them 'only to encourage the vague resentments they reflect.' (Löwenthal 1987, 33) In this way, agitation lends political articulation to latent 'anti-Semitic potential' (Adorno 1963, 109; translated by Kizer Walker). When the latter is 'adopted by politics,' as Horkheimer and Adorno put it in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, a 'system of delusions' can become 'the reasonable norm in [the] world' (Horkheimer and Adorno 1969, 154).

Fourth, however, authoritarian agitation in democracies partly relies on, and draws its success from, both such transgressions appealing to the listener's stereotypes and *insinuations* that serve as psychological stimuli for resentful fantasies, such as the notion of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy. 'The lure of innuendo,' Adorno ascertains, 'grows with its vagueness. It allows for an unchecked play of the imagination and invites all sorts of speculation … '(Adorno 2000, 54) The agitator might refer to 'dark forces' determined to 'undermine' the nation's culture, 'and the audience at once understands that his remarks are directed against the Jews' (Adorno 1994, 135). This has the effect of elevating the status of the audience, which is 'thus treated as an in-group who already know everything the orator wishes to tell them' (Adorno 1994, 135). It is, as Jack Jacobs observes, the 'latent rather than the manifest meaning of the agitators' speeches that is of import – and the latent meaning is one that can be deciphered by use of psychoanalytic insights' (Jacobs 2015, 98). The authoritarian demagogue thus affirms and amplifies the everyday resentments of his audience 'and seemingly paves the way for the relief of the malaise through

discharge of the audience's aggressive impulses, but simultaneously he perpet-
uates the malaise by blocking the way toward real understanding of its cause'
(Löwenthal 1987, 28). This is also expressed in the use of and pleasure in cari-
caturing Jews, minorities, those who are different. 'If the agitator cannot prom-
ise his adherents a greater share of the good things of life,' Löwenthal suggests,
'he can suggest that the good life consists in something else, the gratification of
repressed impulses' (Löwenthal 1987, 38).

Fifth, the agitator himself can advance to the status of a superman and yet, at
the same time, assume the function of an augmented ego for his followers, of-
fering himself as an object of identification, protesting 'that he is quite the same
as the mass' of the population (Löwenthal 1987, 131). The agitator's appeal and
mobilization capacity thus depends to a considerable extent upon an amalgam
of closeness and distance, familiarity and superiority: 'One can identify oneself
with the great "little man" and still look up to him: he satisfies the require-
ment for closeness and warmth, and after affirming what one is already, he also
satisfies the need for an ideal figure to which one will gladly subject oneself'
(The Frankfurt Institute for Social Research 1972, 172). Adorno discerns in the
imagined figures of the leader and the nationalist collectivity a close connec-
tion to the 'conception of Big Brother,' which Adorno maintains amounts to 'an
infinitely expanding projection of the weak ego' (Adorno 1975, 377). The key
psychological mechanisms hereby are, once again, personalization and identi-
fication: 'fascist leaders are personalized as attractive authority figures … The
follower is able to identify with the leader through identification with an ideal-
ized version of him or herself' (Kellner 1989, 119). In addition to reference to
the powerful political group, ethnicity or nation, the constructed image of the
leader thereby plays a decisive role in the production of a collective 'we' feeling,
'the identity that [the leader] verbalizes, an identity the listeners feel and think,
but cannot express' (Adorno 1963, 132).

Technological and socio-political changes notwithstanding, the authoritarian
dynamics presented by Adorno still seem to have some analytic validity. The au-
thoritarian imago and 'glue' that constitutes the group (again, in a more complex
understanding than group pressure or blind submission to authority) is reflected
in current populists' posturing: their alleged defiance and rebellion against 'dark
forces' and the 'deep state,' the 'tough guy' attitudes of someone proudly and with
pleasure transgressing 'soft' and wimpy civil norms, rules, and rights, breaking
free from civilizational pressures and mocking propriety, immigrants, Jews, the
disabled; their appeal to physical strength and power against intellect, weakness,
tenderness, mediation, reflection, criticism, and 'just talking.'

2.4. The Primacy of the Object(ified) World: Rethinking Social Reification and the Racket

A final significant path to be developed for a critical theory of populism af-
ter Adorno to which I can only allude here is to situate these insights in the

context of Adorno's social theory models about the dialectics of objectification, fetishization, and social domination. For Adorno, authoritarian revolts against modernity and (the restraints of) civilization function 'directly in the service of domination' (Horkheimer and Adorno 1969, 152). They seek to further harden and totalize exclusion, oppression, and destruction. They are not just a return of the repressed and the archaic but cannot be untied from existing patterns of modern social domination shaped by economic imperatives, as well as the wholesale reification of social relations and the object world: 'As a rebellion against civilization fascism is not simply the reoccurrence of the archaic but its reproduction *in and by civilization itself*' (Adorno 2001, 137; emphasis LR). For Adorno, it is the dominant objectifying identity logic, with its blind effect against non-identity and social difference that helps engender such regressive collective rebellions based on pathic or false projection and social or group paranoia: 'Because paranoiacs perceive the outside world only in so far as it corresponds to their blind purposes,' Horkheimer and Adorno suggest, 'they can only endlessly repeat their own self, which has been alienated from them as an abstract mania' (Horkheimer and Adorno 1969, 157).

Such paranoiac delusions about the world – detached from reality, experience, and better arguments – are inherently destructive and self-destructive. Against the backdrop of these arguments, it is worth theorizing how far today's apocalyptic populist delusions are linked to post-industrial society's patterns of social domination. These include an economically and politically bolstered Social Darwinism, which shows little mercy for those deprived of access to social goods and opportunities, and which operates crudely in objectified economic terms of win or lose, success or failure. The post-modern authoritarians seem to strongly identify with these terms and respective ideologies – even if they are themselves on the losing end. The flourishing fetishization of identity, directed against individuality, pluralistic freedom and diversity, and universal emancipation, is another constitutive feature of political postmodernity mirroring insights into the conditions of political modernity analysed by Critical Theory (Rensmann and Gandesha 2012).

A related analytic path points to new organizational forms that emerged in the first half of the twentieth century and seem to celebrate a comeback right now. Horkheimer translates the post-liberal process of social objectification and authoritarian rebellion in the service of domination into a theory of rackets. For him, the concept of the 'racket' provides a theoretical grounding for politics in its modern form (Greven 1994). Borrowing an American colloquialism and adopting a term from the world of organized crime, Horkheimer posits the racket as the basic form of (political) domination; one based on the political violence of those groups that are capable of using it and prepared to foist themselves on society as extortionate 'protectors.' Horkheimer defines the organizational entity of the racket as a powerful closed group or clique, organized strictly hierarchically, that combines power and economic interests and accumulates resources by means of extortion, i.e. by threats, force, and intimidation. The racket excludes and oppresses all those who do not unconditionally

surrender to its rule and power – the Italian mafia is an exemplary form of a racket (see also Granter 2017). A typical manifestation of late capitalism, according the Horkheimer the racket system merges protection of its members with direct coercion and ruthless violence.

Horkheimer hereby insists that 'antidemocratic forces seek to transform man' into a 'deindividualized, incoherent, and fully malleable personality structure' in order to 'conceal … the very possibility of independent thinking and autonomous decision' (Horkheimer, in Löwenthal 1987, 2). Various rival rackets behave as factions, competing against each other to appropriate the extorted political-economic spoils. All social-historical phenomena up to the present have borne the mark of the racket, according to Horkheimer. In the idea of genuine democracy, which survives in a repressed, subterranean state, the dream of a society free of rackets has never been entirely extinguished, Horkheimer maintains. But the racket form has been revived in modern society – organized capitalism – which is again constituted basically along the lines of the racket, particularly in the extreme case of fascism. In this form of social organization, it is rackets, not class contradictions that give rise to the hierarchical structure of the society's internal workings. The mediation forms of bourgeois society, in this view, are partly replaced by a repressive collectivization of the human being that is politically determined, not economically mediated.

2.5. Critical Theory and the Populist Revolt in Europe: Towards a Framework for the Study of Authoritarian Politics in Our Time

Critical Theory's work reminds us that the authoritarian politics of paranoia remain a powerful force in 'enlightened' modern society – one which continues to negatively influence our political environment.[7] This force, which perceives chaos and disorder all around, still finds a fertile soil in modern states and global publics. In Critical Theory's view, an antidemocratic political climate has particular influence on those who, Löwenthal suggests with regard to a group of American workers, are waging 'an inner struggle between reason and prejudice' (Löwenthal 1987, 250). The political collective mobilization of fear by means of authoritarian agitation can actualize both authoritarian dispositions and real anxieties, as Franz Neumann contends,[8] thereby constricting the subject's decision-making abilities. If authoritarian dispositions in a constitutively contradictory modern global society are translated into action depends, in part, on whether anti-democratic discourses enter and seize the public sphere and whether powerful political and economic interests make use of authoritarian politics 'by conscious design or not,' as Adorno puts it (Adorno et al. 1950, 7).

The reconstruction of the analytical paths pointed out here requires more reconstructive work to unfold their full potential in face of contemporary authoritarian populist challenges. I have argued here, however, that original Critical

Theory may provide a rich resource for developing a critical understanding of the rise of 'illiberal democracy' and the potential of authoritarian populist politics in our time. Critical Theory's social theorizing and its reflections on societal conditions, socio-psychological dispositions, and authoritarian political mobilizations, provide a series of conceptual and empirical insights that are fruitful for analysing contemporary right-wing populism in European democracies and beyond. Even though the Frankfurt School may not offer a comprehensive political theory or explanatory framework assessing the role of contemporary authoritarian politics, it provides multiple significant directions for its study.

First, notwithstanding many post-Freudian critiques, Critical Theory offers a still relevant, sophisticated model of authoritarianism as a contradictory socio-psychological force beyond mere conceptions of blind obedience and submission. Rather, it points to authoritarian aggression and wild projections of one's own fears, desires, hatred and problems to the external world.

Second, the Frankfurt School theorists describe, explain and reconstruct important features and dynamics of the political psychology of authoritarian agitation linked to the theory of authoritarianism, and of an 'authoritarian revolt' in particular. These features and dynamics resonate and are partly reproduced in today's populist politics. In their empirical work on authoritarian politics the Frankfurt School scholars demonstrate that there are context-independent political dimensions of such politics. Some psycho-technologies of demagoguery appear to function uniformly across the most disparate political conditions. The Institute's researchers observe always recurring patterns, ideological repertoires, and resentful themes and motifs in fascist agitation. This includes a set of standardized, repeated strategies working as devices and organizing principles that can be identified in a variety of political or religious manifestations operating in different political contexts. A recurring guiding principle is 'psychoanalysis in reverse,' that is: hate speech seeks to mobilize unconscious fears and desires rather than making them conscious, and it consistently lacks specific policy programs. Moreover, Adorno and Löwenthal argue that an effective demagogue tends to simultaneously display features of a leader above the pack, and of a common man who is simply 'one of us.' Though often unrecognized, these early groundbreaking findings by the Frankfurt School may thus help continue to guide the analysis of political mechanisms and conditions of hate speech today. For instance, the Frankfurt School illuminates the specific ways demagogues effectively employ innuendo under conditions of liberal democracy. They allude to conspiracies against 'the people' by suggesting dark, sinister, personified forces are at work and responsible for today's social malaise and problems without explicitly naming 'the Jews,' elevating the audience which 'knows' who is targeted and making it thereby part of an in-group. The Critical Theorists also show how demagogues gain support by allowing their listeners to projectively and legitimately indulge in fantasies of oppression, crimes, or sexual violence the followers may dream or wish to commit themselves ('immigrant rape culture'). The Critical Theorists thereby point to a

limited, standardized repertoire of techniques, images, and resentment, which increases its effectiveness through repetition. This also applies to the constantly repeated binary construction between 'us' and 'them,' which simplifies a complex world and its challenges by dividing society into kind-hearted followers and ruthless 'enemies of the people' (in the words of Geert Wilders or Donald Trump in reference to 'the media' and 'the corrupt establishment'). The excitement of populist multitudes susceptible to resentful propaganda, Critical Theory demonstrates, is grounded in psychological triggers and effects that point to conformist wishes to join a powerful nativist collective, as well as hopes to take part in authoritarian aggressions against the 'Others' and the pleasures of legitimate rebellion, of breaking the rules of civilization in the name of restoring social order. In this context, the coarseness of political discourse and the provocative, transgressive 'bad manners' so typical for all authoritarian populists in Europe today can be understood as an effective tool and lure appealing to unconscious desires characteristic of the agitators analysed by the Frankfurt School – from actors defaming immigrants as 'bad sheep' (*Lega Nord*) to the AfD that wishes to 'lock up' political opponents or relativizes the Holocaust. Critical Theory also explains why contemporary populist demagogues may seek to appear, and increase their appeal, as both a 'brother' – someone close to the common people and their language ('some bad dudes out there') – and a superhero or saviour, the last man standing who can save an allegedly beleaguered nation.

Third, Critical Theory turns our attention, conceptually and theoretically, to the broader societal dynamics and to the origins of civilizational discontent and authoritarian rebellions in the age of global capitalism. Hence, the resurgence of authoritarian movements is seen as a potential political force if there are no substantive social and democratic alternatives in sight: 'If no hope of true solidarity is held out to the masses, they may desperately stick to this negative substitute' (Adorno 2000, 62–63).

The Frankfurt School theorists also understand that political factors are also critical with regard to limiting hate speech and authoritarian politics. Its success is therefore to a considerable extent dependent on specific political contexts and actors through which public resentments can be politically instigated or combatted, tolerated or negatively sanctioned. To be sure, for the Frankfurt School 'objective' societal conditions are primarily responsible for a persistent undercurrent of resentments that enable the rise of authoritarian politics within democracies. Societal conditions help reproduce the weakening of individuals and make them susceptible to the authoritarian appeal and aggression. Yet specific political conditions – the political and cultural climate, institutions, and the behavior of political actors – along with semi-public, quotidian, and public discourses facilitated through mass communication, exercise decisive influences on the opportunities for authoritarian aggression and its potential transformation into a politically relevant destructive force. Consequently, from Critical Theory's point of view it is also important to actively delegitimize hate

speech, and to exercise social, legal, and political authority against violent authoritarian politics and hate crimes. A politico-cultural context or social climate that allows such hate speech to flourish without being challenged and ostracized is seen as an enabling condition for the rise of anti-Semitism, and of hate speech in general. Critical publics play a key role in challenging the social and political acceptance of such views.

The new authoritarian demagogues, like the old ones, employ a stark, vertical group dichotomy: the '(corrupt) elite' is juxtaposed to the '(pure) people,' and the former allegedly oppressing and victimizing the latter. The right-wing populists in Europe and America are also distinctively *nativist* or ethnic-nationalist; that is, they employ nostalgic national myths and exclusionary conceptions of the demos as a culturally or ethnically homogenous nation. This implies a second dichotomy – a horizontal binary of 'us' against the 'Others,' the 'nation' against minorities, immigrants, refugees, Muslims, Jews, and 'foreign powers.' All new right-wing populist actors mobilize this rhetoric: from the Alternative für Deutschland to Wilders, from the Front National to the Austrian FPÖ, from UKIP in Great Britain to Trump, from PiS in Poland to Viktor Orbàn's FIDESZ (both of which rule with absolute majorities, the latter even since 2010; see Albertazzi and McDonnell 2015). And third, these populists display *authoritarian* features in their ideology and politics. Portraying themselves as their countries' saviours from what they darkly paint as 'crisis and disaster,' they propose authoritarian actions and measures.

The rise of fake news and post-factual politics are one of the new major enabling conditions of the current success of what I call, following Critical Theory's understanding of authoritarian agitation, *authoritarian politics of delusion*. Delusions depend on the willingness to follow them but also a broadly legitimizing supply side, or social cosmos. Benefitting from rapidly restructured public spheres, fake media and authoritarian populists – from Donald Trump to Viktor Orbàn in Hungary or Geert Wilders in the Netherlands – jointly seek to blur the distinctions between fact, opinion, fiction, and propaganda. For a long time, right-wing populists have blamed the 'establishment media,' the 'dishonest media,' or the 'Lügenpresse' (the German AfD) for conspiring and deliberately manipulating public opinion and suppressing 'truth' – especially the term 'lying press' has antisemitic connotations and was also used by the Nazis (it traditionally insinuates that 'the Jews' control the media). But only now, with the rise of 'citizen journalism' and grassroots media activism, these sentiments find and generate mass publics (again) in post-War democracies. This prominently entails resentments against immigrants and minorities, 'political correctness' and the 'liberal elite,' feminism and intellectualism, and often even includes conspiracy myths. However, only with the growth and democratization of social media, these sentiments gained a new, unprecedented level of publicity in democracies. There is, consequently, a new, virtual, yet loud-mouthed social media mob denouncing facts and promoting prejudice: the democratization of resentment. Authoritarian populists thrive

on this destabilization of reality and the democratization of resentments through dubious social media sources. They simultaneously legitimize and reinforce it – and they are especially capable of doing so if they hold positions of institutional power.

Leo Löwenthal's and Theodor W. Adorno's empirical analyses of fascist agitators in America disclose what techniques and ideological tropes – from collective self-aggrandizement to conspiracy myths about 'the establishment' – resonate among voters who are yearning for a conformist rebellion and for authoritarian strongmen to 'clean up' a complex, contradictory, globalized world. The Frankfurt School also provides important hypotheses about the sources of the demagogues' appeal that meets the demands of supporters from different social strata. Applying Critical Theory's political, social and psychological insights about the origins and features of authoritarian mobilizations in modern democracies to these contemporary movements helps us better understand the latter. The politics of resentment and its social undercurrents point to the theoretical potential of the Frankfurt School to analyse the rise of illiberal democracy and authoritarian populist success in our time.

Notes

[1] While populist agitators claim to speak in the name of 'the people' and recover democracy as 'the rule of the people,' they mean a Schmittian democracy by acclamation that undermines democratic representation and legitimate rule of law; and they often propose authoritarian measures directed at curtailing liberal rights and freedoms, as well as attacking the underlying universalistic, individualistic and pluralistic features constitutive of robust liberal or constitutional democracies. Cf. Schmitt 1932.

[2] At first sight, it appears particularly puzzling in Europe, with her legacies of Nazi totalitarianism, authoritarianism, total war, and genocide followed by democratization.

[3] Some ideas on political demagoguery in the lens of the Frankfurt School have originally been discussed in Rensmann 2017.

[4] They include his empirical work on fascist radio addresses, his essays on 'Freudian Theory and the Patterns of Fascist Propaganda,' and 'Antisemitism and Fascist Propaganda,' and *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses*. A study that immensely contributes to and advances the first systematic social scientific analysis of modern political hate speech, which is typical for successful right-wing populists in Europe, is what Jack Jacobs calls the 'second most important volume' of the *Studies in Prejudice*: *Prophets of Deceit* by Leo Löwenthal and Norbert Guterman (who was closer to the Frankfurt School than many of the collaborators of *The Authoritarian Personality*). On the continuation of this work after Adorno's and Horkheimer's return to Germany see Platz 2012.

⁵ The mechanisms of authoritarian political mobilization may all the more apply to authoritarian modern societies: from Putin's Russia to Erdogan's dictatorship in Turkey.

⁶ The markedly positive connotation that Adorno gives here to civilization's 'moulding' function is curious (although, in fact, this valuation recurs throughout the empirical antisemitism studies). After all, it is Adorno himself who in his social theory situates the unbridled authoritarian character with his weakened drive structure at the very origins of bourgeois subjectivity and the dialectic of the history of civilization. The use of the obscurantist term 'asocial' is also vexing; 'anti-social' would, in any case, be more apt in this context. In the English-language original, it can at least be said in Adorno's defense that the term 'asocial' appears within quotation marks (Adorno et al. 1950, 763); in the unauthorized German translation, such care was not taken (Thanks to Kizer Walker for pointing out these distinctions).

⁷ On the usage of Frankfurt School 'Critical Theory' as a joint actor sharing a common lens of analysis, see Rensmann 2017, chapter 1.

⁸ 'The purpose of the theory is clear: potential anxiety – whose concrete significance still needs to be clarified – is actualized by reference to the devilish conspirators. … ' (Neumann 1957, 284).

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Understanding Right and Left Populism[1]

Samir Gandesha

We appear to be living in an age of populism. Over the past two decades, we have witnessed the rise of right-wing populist parties throughout Europe such as Haider's Freedom Party in Austria, Victor Orban's Fidesz Party in Hungary, and the Polish Law and Justice Party. Such an emergence hasn't been confined to Europe but is a global phenomenon as evinced, for example, by the electoral triumphs of Narendra Modi in India in 2014 and that of Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey as early as 2003. But no phenomena more clearly supports this thesis than the stunning victory of Donald J. Trump in the 2016 American presidential election and the triumph of the Leave Campaign led by the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP).

But there has also been a populism of the Left. The Arab Spring was widely regarded as a broad-based, if short-lived, popular revolt and therefore as a kind of populism in the streets in 2011. The events of Tahrir Square profoundly inspired the Occupy Movement – sparked by the editor of the Vancouver-based magazine *Ad Busters'* exhortation – to 'Occupy Wall Street!' Radiating out beyond Zuccotti Park, the movement spread through much of the Western world. Arguably, the Occupy Movement's most significant and enduring effect was to be felt five years later in the dramatic grassroots support for Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders' bid for the Democratic Party's Presidential nomination, which was – as recent juridical proceedings have revealed – undermined by the actions of the DNC. In the United Kingdom, Jeremy Corbyn could also be said to have

benefitted from the anti-systematic tendencies that crystallized in the global economic crisis. He also focused opposition to the Blairite politics of what Tariq Ali calls the 'extreme centre,' or the abdication of social democracy (Tony Blair's 'New Labour' in particular), from its role of providing substantive opposition to neoliberalism (See Marcuse 1991, and Ali 2015). Corbyn's leadership contributed to a rather shocking result in the recent UK General Election in June 2017, in which Labour managed to increase its share of the vote by the largest margin since Clement Atlee during the 1945 post-war election (*Independent*, 9 June). Latin America, moreover, has seen a dramatic revival of populism in the Bolivarian model in the Chavez/Maduro regime in Venezuela and in Evo Morales in Bolivia as well as in the Kirchner governments in Argentina. The dramatic global rise of populist parties and movements has resulted in a burgeoning scholarship on this most slippery of political concepts (Abromeit et al. 2015).

We can preliminarily distinguish between what we might call neo-liberal and populist politics, an opposition that has only sharpened as a result of the previous four decades of neo-liberal policies.[2] Neo-liberal politics can be distinguished from liberal politics insofar as, based on the centrality of the rights-bearing citizen; the former is centred on the rate-payer in contrast to the latter. Neo-liberal politics is premised largely on the idea that politics can be modelled on neo-classical economics; that political parties aim to expand market share in the polity in much the same way that firms seek to do so in the market of goods and services. Wendy Brown has called this the 'marketization of democracy' corresponding to the thorough-going transformation of the *citoyen* into *homo economicus*. As Brown suggests, 'neoliberal reason, ubiquitous today in statecraft and the workplace, in jurisprudence, education, culture, and a vast range of quotidian activity, is converting the distinctly political character, meaning, and operation of democracy's constituent elements into economic ones.' (Brown 2015, 17). The 'rational choice' of the rate-payer is modelled on that of the consumer looking to maximize utility. The implication is that institutions of economics are analogous to those of politics. In other words, the market is to economics as parliament is to politics. If the market coordinates the free exchange of commodities, parliament coordinates the free exchange of policy ideas from which 'consumers' and 'citizens' respectively may choose. Common to politics and economics understood in such terms is the idea that underlying both sets of institutions is a form of rationality.[3] The untrammelled market produces optimal outcomes, whereas unencumbered parliamentary discussion fosters the best policy outcomes which themselves secure political utility, which is to say, the most efficient 'authoritative allocation of resources.'

Populism challenges the parliamentary model (and occasionally the market model as well) by suggesting that legislative representatives not only fail to adequately represent the interests of their constituents (the *people*) but work to undermine them. That untrammelled parliamentary discussion is one thing, but actual executive decision-making is quite another. Indeed, in place of parliamentarianism, debate and discussion and compromise between opposed

parties and groups, populism suggests that politics hinges upon the existential confrontation between 'the people' and the 'elite' or the 'powerful.' It is not difficult to see that populism isn't just a different kind of party politics *within* liberal-democratic states, but rather constitutes the 'crisis of parliamentary democracy' (Schmitt 1985). While liberal-democracy – through division of powers and checks and balances – seeks to limit sovereignty, populist politics are geared to a direct, unmediated assertion of the sovereignty of the 'people.'

But how can we understand populism with more precision? How can we account for its recent pervasiveness? Does populism corrode human rights or does it buttress them? In an effort to answer these questions, I will focus on two exemplary accounts of populism before working toward an alternative theoretical model based on the Frankfurt School's attempt to come to terms with the emergence of fascism in the third and fourth decades of the twentieth century.

The first is a recent widely-cited and discussed empirical study by Norris and Inglehart (2016). The second is a more theoretical account of populism by Ernesto Laclau articulated over several decades (Laclau 1977, Laclau and Mouffe 1985, Laclau 2006).[4] The former seeks to account for the contemporary expression of populism in the rise of Donald Trump as well as in the Brexit vote in the U.K. last summer. The latter is grounded in an understanding of populism in the Latin American southern cone – with a particular emphasis on Laclau's native Argentina in the post-war period – and tends to understand the logic populism as ultimately coextensive with the logic of politics *per se*. If Norris and Inglehart struggle to come to terms with the populism of the *Left*, then Laclau struggles to come to adequate grips with the populism of the *Right*. The former draw upon a somewhat narrow definition of populism, emphasizing its anti-establishment, authoritarian and nativist dimensions; the latter understands populism as a logic constituted by the establishment of an '*equivalential* chain' of *different* demands and appears to suggest that populism is a democratic, horizontal and egalitarian discourse. To begin assessing the relationship between populism and human rights, it is necessary to grasp populism on both sides of the political spectrum.

3.1. Explaining Populism: Economic Insecurity or Cultural Backlash?

A paper widely discussed in the media by Pippa Norris of Harvard University and Ronald Inglehart of the University of Michigan suggests – following Cas Mudde – that populism shares three distinct elements: 1) *anti-establishmentism*, 2) *authoritarianism* and 3) *nativism*. The first contrasts with the established structures of *representative democracy*; the second with the principles of *liberalism* (in particular with the protection of minority rights), and emphasizes the direct expression of popular will via charismatic leadership, referenda and plebiscites that circumvent the typical checks and balances of liberal-democracy;

and the third contrasts with *cosmopolitanism* (Norris and Inglehart 2016, 6–7). Building on Mudde's conceptualization, the authors develop a heuristic model of populism based upon two distinct axes: economic and cultural. The former has to do with the level of state management of the economy, and the latter has to do with 'conservative' versus 'progressive' values. The authors suggest three possible analytical types of explanation for the rise of populism: 1) the rules of the game, 2) the 'supply-side' of the market of party politics and 3) the 'demand-side' of party politics. They gear their explanation to the third dimension and suggest that this can be understood to have two distinct – though not mutually exclusive – causes. The first is that populism emerges in response to *economic insecurity*, and the second is that populism appears as a *backlash* by older white males to the erosion of traditional cultural values.[5] Norris and Inglehart argue that the latter is the most convincing argument.

> Overall we conclude that cultural values, combined with several social and demographic factors, provide the most consistent and parsimonious explanation for voting support for populist parties; their contemporary popularity in Europe is largely due to ideological appeals to traditional values which are concentrated among the older generation, men, the religious, ethnic majorities, and less educated sectors of society. We believe that these are the groups most likely to feel that they have become strangers from the predominant values in their own country, left behind by progressive tides of cultural change which they do not share. Older white men with traditional values – who formed the cultural majority in Western societies during the 1950s and 1960s – have seen their predominance and privilege eroded. The silent revolution of the 1970s appears to have spawned an angry and resentful counter-revolutionary backlash today. (2016, 4–5)

While the empirical data the authors cite to support their argument is indeed impressive, it is possible to raise significant objections about the way they *frame* this evidence. First, the separation of 'supply' and 'demand' explanations seems deeply dubious. In strictly economic terms, demand is often manufactured and managed by the supplier in terms of marketing, advertising, and public relations. And these mechanisms have only become more important in the contemporary period.[6] As Benjamin Moffitt (2016) has recently argued, if one fails to appreciate the role of mass media in politics it is simply not possible to explain figures like Silvio Berlusconi and Donald Trump.[7]

A second objection follows from the second cause: the study defines populism in exclusively right-wing terms, and therefore the study could be said to be biased towards cultural explanations. Such a definition precludes a populism of the left which Mudde's account permits. Mudde argues that populism isn't necessarily characterized by authoritarianism and nativism, but can be combined with them. He also allows for populisms of the left as well as the right. For

Mudde (2017, 10), populism is comprised of the moralistic opposition between a 'pure' people and a 'corrupt elite,' and aims at the direct expression of what Rousseau called the 'general will' (*la volonté générale*). By mischaracterizing Mudde's definition as inherently authoritarian and nativist, Norris and Inglehart bias their conclusion towards culturalist explanations.

The culturalist explanations cannot convincingly account for the political orientation of a figure like the gay, former Marxist Pim Fortuyn, who defined his version of populism in progressive terms – as a defense of liberal Dutch values against the traditionalism of Islam. Moreover, it is not uncommon for social democrats in Nordic countries (notably Denmark) to favour more restrictive immigration policies as a means of defending the welfare state.[8] Moreover, if populism is a backlash generated by the cultural anxieties of *older white males*, how do we account for the fact that 53% of white women voters opted for Trump despite the aggressive misogyny he exhibited throughout the 2016 American Presidential Election campaign?[9] And how do we account for the growing support for right-populism among young people – in Europe under the guise of '*Génération Identitaire*' and in the U.S. under that of the Alt-Right (Nagle 2017)?

A third objection is that it is debatable that we've been witnessing the steady triumph of 'progressive values.' Indeed, today it is far from clear what comprises 'progressive values,' as we saw in the recent Democratic Presidential Nomination pitting Hillary Rodham Clinton against Bernie Sanders. The former emphasized identity questions; for example, she highlighted the prospectively historic nature of her presidency as the first female president, following the first African American president. The latter highlighted problems of social inequality; he emphasized the growing gap between the 1% and 99%, the imperative of breaking up large financial institutions, making post-secondary education affordable, and so on. This opposition has been echoed in debates between political theorists in terms of the relative priority between politics of *recognition* versus *redistribution* (Fraser and Honneth 2004).[10]

If 'progressive' values are understood in terms of the former, we have arguably witnessed a greater societal recognition of a multiplicity of ethnic, sexual, linguistic and other identities. Yet from the standpoint of the latter, the past three decades have seen a dramatic *reversal* in 'progressive values' insofar as redistribution has occurred in an upward rather than downward direction, as Thomas Piketty (2013) has convincingly shown (see also Ben Michaels 2006; Reed Jr. 2001).[11] The reversal in progressive values arguably has to do with, amongst other things, the demise of a competing social system, the corresponding decline of the organized left, a drastic softening of union membership and a rightward shift of social democracy. A precipitous decline in union membership, of course, has profound implications for the active exercise of citizenship insofar as declining union membership means that fewer individuals have experienced at least a semblance of direct democracy within the workplace; and this contributes to the creation of a more depoliticized citizenry overall. All of these

factors could be taken to amount to exactly a reversal in 'progressive values' if we define 'progressive values' in terms of not just negative but positive liberty, or a deepening of the capacity for reasoned self-determination.

Norris and Inglehart take Green parties as epitomizing 'progressivism.' However, in many cases, including Canada and Germany, this seems questionable according to their own definition of 'progressive' as meaning greater recognition of difference. In the Canadian case, the Green Party has championed market-based solutions to environmental problems, which puts it directly at odds with the Indigenous view of the land as inherently non-commodifiable and inalienable. As for the German Green Party, while it emerged as a social movement rooted in the anti-nuclear weapons campaigns and the Peace movement, it quickly morphed into a coalition partner and held the Foreign Ministry of the first German government to take the country to war in the post-World War period. This cannot be viewed as unequivocally 'progressive.'[12]

Whether populism can be understood exclusively in terms of traditionalist backlash is also debatable. If this was the predominant measure of populist politics, one could expect recent immigrants – who themselves hold traditional values – to the U.S., the U.K. and other parts of Europe to join in these movements.[13] However, far from this being the case, they are often the targets of the backlash.

Finally, one wonders whether the authors don't seriously underestimate the threat right-wing populism poses to the institutions of liberal-democracy in the United States. A worrying inference that the authors explicitly draw from their study is that, insofar as populism is a type of politics favoured by a generation of older white men, its days are numbered; this demographic, with the mere passing of time, will eventually die out. The authors argue that:

> In the longer-term, the generation gap is expected to fade over time, as older cohorts with…traditional attitudes are gradually replaced in the population by their children and grand-children, adhering to more progressive values. In the short-term, however, the heated culture wars dividing young and old have the capacity to heighten generational conflict, to challenge the legitimacy of liberal democracy, and to disrupt long-established patterns of party competition. (4)

In other words, history is on the side of the forces of 'progress.'[14] Without wanting to sound alarmist, what is worrying about this perspective is that this was – as the German-Jewish philosopher and critic Walter Benjamin noted (1986) – the kind of thinking in certain quarters of German Social Democracy that facilitated the rise of Nazism in the 1930s. The study fails to sufficiently appreciate the ways in which populist governments seek to *institutionalize* their agendas, thereby changing the rules of the game. This has become most drastically evident in the case of Poland in which Andrzej Duda (leader of the right-populist Law and Justice party) has significantly limited the autonomy

of the judicial branch of government. In the U.S., one witnesses a whole of host of measures such a gerrymandering, voter suppression or what Michelle Alexander (2012) calls the 'New Jim Crow,'[15] the dismantling of the EPA, the gutting of public education, the recent Department of Justice claim that the Civil Rights Act does not apply to members of the LGBTQ community and the disabled, the attempt to de-legitimize the judicial branch of government, and (of course) attacks on the fourth estate as purveyors of 'fake news.' The developments mentioned above amount to nothing less than the long-term in-stitutional transformation of the structure of U.S. liberal-democracy, and this has dire consequences for human and civil rights. But this is hardly registered, if at all, in this study. These developments accelerated under Trump. They have roots in the Tea Party-wing of the GOP, and also have roots in the policies of President Bill Clinton (in particular, the disenfranchisement of inmates of state and federal penitentiaries). Such a transformation of the rules of the game would be especially dramatic in the case of a major socio-economic or political crisis – such as a major terror attack, which could constitute something like a Reichstag fire scenario (see Klein 2017).

3.2. Understanding the Logic of Populism

If Norris and Inglehart's conception of populism is underdeveloped, and their argument that the rise of populism has to do with a cultural backlash fails to convince, Ernesto Laclau's theorization of populism is the most sophisticated and ambitious. Laclau's work has the added interest of being informed by the historical experiences of populism in the form of Peronism in his native Argentina, and directly influencing the 'neo-Peronism' of the Kirchner regimes that came into being after the economic catastrophe of the late 1990s (2003–2015). Laclau's post-Gramscian approach to populism as a leftist political strat-egy has also profoundly influenced political parties such as Podemos in Spain and SYRIZA in Greece before its capitulation to the Troika.

   Laclau's initial theorization of populism arises out of a structuralist – or Althusserian – reading of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (See Mouffe 2014). Gramsci is best known for his understanding of the Russian Revolu-tion as a 'revolution against *Capital*' (1994, 39–42) and for his cutting against the grain of the Third International to address the problem of the 'national-popular' forms of political mobilization in social formations like Italy that were marked by a profound and enduring 'combined but uneven development' lead-ing to the split – one which is still very much reflected in the politics of the Ital-ian Northern League – between an industrialized north and a largely agrarian south (See Gramsci 1978, 441–462). As an attempt to address both problems, Gramsci seized upon Lenin's idea that in the context of the particular agrar-ian conditions of Russia the working class was not the sole agent of political transformation, but rather had to play a leading or 'hegemonic' role. Gramsci's

signal contribution is the 'elaboration of the Bolshevik thesis of *gegemoniya* into the qualitatively new theory of *egemonia* (Thomas 2009,137). The Revolution's slogan 'Peace, bread and land' was not exclusively proletarian in content. It included the demands of other social classes, namely the peasantry – a class that Marx once argued was objectively reactionary because its members were isolated from one another, working in small groups on lord's *demesne*, rather than in large numbers in urban industrial factories. As we shall see, the capacity of populism to incorporate heterogeneous demands within the constitution of 'the people' will form the core of Laclau's conception. The logical unfolding of this conception entails a progressive decentring of the working class, to the point where social structure dissolves in a radically contingent play of signification that can only be provisionally and incompletely arrested to yield fixity and stability. For Laclau it becomes the very essence of the hegemonic logic of the political.

For Gramsci, the working class in Italy could play a hegemonic role by virtue of its claim of addressing the condition of unequal development by assuming a leadership or what he called an 'ethico-political' role within the nation. In other words, while in other countries – paradigmatically France – it was the bourgeoisie that unified the country under the auspices of the nation-state, for Gramsci, in Italy it would be the working class that would assume the mantle of 'national-popular' leadership. The Communist Party, specifically, would play the role of what Gramsci called the 'Modern Prince,' and echo Machiavelli's call at the very end of *The Prince* (2003, 82–85) for Lorenzo de Medici to unify Italy. For Gramsci, hegemony represents the 'cathartic moment' whereby the working class transcends its narrow 'trade union' interests and becomes capable of integrating the interests of other 'subaltern' classes into its political project. In other words, hegemony entails the translation of the particular into the universal. If politics entails the conflict of particular and opposed interests, and ethics a universal interest through which such conflicts are superseded then hegemony entails quite literally an ethico-political moment culminating in concrete universality (Gramsci 2007, 63).[16] It is not difficult to see the attraction of the Italian Marxist preoccupied with the 'southern question' for a figure like Laclau who was profoundly attentive to the semi-peripheral status of his native Argentina. It was precisely in semi-peripheral states that the process of translation or what Laclau would call 'articulation' between particular and universal would become so consequential.

Laclau approaches Gramsci through an Althusserian-Poulantzian lens (1977, 125), which means that he seeks to interpret the Italian theorist through the idea of *structural* as opposed to *expressive* totality. For the latter, most clearly outlined in the early work of Georg Lukács (1972), totality was understood (at least according to Althusser) as *expressing* a single underlying contradiction within the realm of the economy between the relations and forces of production, that would prioritize the working class as the agent of revolutionary change.[17] From

the standpoint of the expressive conception of totality, class determinations that arise out of this contradiction can be located at every level of society as a whole; state and politics, culture and ideology. For example, Lukács famously argued that proletarian consciousness provided an answer to some of the most complex philosophical questions arising out of German Idealism. Against this, Althusser developed a notion of structural totality between different instances of the mode of production, each of which possessed a 'relative autonomy' from one another, although the economic was ultimately the determining element. While for the Hegelian-Marxist conception of totality secondary contradictions simply reflect principal contradictions, for the structuralist conception of totality, Althusser argues 'the secondary contradictions are essential even to the existence of the principal contradiction, that they really constitute its conditions of existence, just as the principal contradiction constitutes their condition of existence' (2006, 205). The relation between the different elements of a mode of production is established via a notion of *articulation*.

In the 'Theory of Populism' essay included in the volume *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*,[18] Laclau argues that Lukácsian Marxism seeks to understand politics and ideology – and populism by extension – on the basis of reductionism. Reducing them to the ruling class positions, Laclau seeks to understand them in terms of *articulation*. Articulation means a linkage of elements in a given ideology or what he later calls 'discourse.' As he puts it succinctly, 'classes exist at the ideological and political level in a process of articulation and not of reduction' (1977, 161). Laclau conceives of populism as an 'antagonistic synthesis;' a synthesis of heterogeneous elements with no necessary class belonging, that plays a role in a given antagonism between the 'people' and the 'power bloc' or state. In other words, the contradiction between proletarian and bourgeois at the economic level took the form of an antagonism between 'the people' and the 'power bloc' at the level of politics and ideology (1977, 107). Moreover, there was no necessary relation between the two. The content – what makes a given ideology democratic or authoritarian – has to do with its form of articulation.[19]

In his hugely influential yet profoundly controversial subsequent work (for example, see Wood 1986) with Chantal Mouffe entitled *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Laclau seeks to develop his analysis of populism so as to generate a new post-Marxist politics. In other words, Laclau is developing in a British context (he was based at Essex University) a political strategy that is germane to a context that has seen the rise of what Stuart Hall has called 'authoritarian populism' (1988, 123–150) in the form of Thatcherism (which was successful in facing down the Arthur Scargill and the NUM just around the time of the book's publication). *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*[20] differs from Laclau's earlier work in at least two ways: 1) it breaks with Althusserian Marxism, particularly Nicos Poulantzas, insofar as it no longer accords the working class a privileged role in social transformation; and 2) it provides a discursive account of the social. As Laclau and Mouffe argue:

> In our view, in order to advance in the determination of social antago-
> nisms, it is necessary to analyse the plurality of diverse and frequently
> contradictory positions, and to discard the idea of a perfectly unified
> and homogenous agent, such as the 'working class' of classical discourse.
> The search for the 'true' working class and its limits is a false problem,
> and as such lacks any theoretical or political relevance. (1986, 84)

The continuity, however, lies in the fact that Laclau insists upon the centrality
of the concept of hegemonic articulation of heterogeneous political demands as
the basis of a leftist political strategy.

In *On Populist Reason* (2005) Laclau develops the basic notion of populism
as an 'antagonistic synthesis,' but now he understands this in terms of an equiv-
alential articulation of differences in relation to an 'antagonistic frontier' (2005,
84–86) For Laclau, as becomes apparent in his excoriating criticisms of Hardt
and Negri's concept of the 'multitude' and what he calls Žižek's 'Martian poli-
tics,' all democratic politics are populist (223–50). In other words, if we assume
that society is inherently heterogeneous, politics must entail the hegemonic
articulation of a multiplicity of political demands in a manner that is always
provisional and open to revision. A given hegemonic equivalential articula-
tion of differences is always shifting and temporary and is based on the logic
of the empty signifier. The key difference from his previous work is Laclau's
attempt to conceptualize the affective dimension of politics via Lacanian psy-
choanalysis. John Kraniauskas (2006) understands this as the articulation of a
Gramscian Lacan in contradistinction to Žižek's Hegelian Lacan. While the lat-
ter takes as its point of departure the understanding of the 'desire of the Other'
(the impossible-because-unattainable desire for intersubjective recognition),
the former can be understood in terms of political desire. For Laclau political
desire is geared to what Lacan calls the 'objet petit a,' meaning a partial ob-
ject that is a fragment of the Real (the order that eludes symbolization yet is
caught within the symbolic order). The 'objet petit a' is often symbolized by the
bountiful breast; and as such promises a return to an original plenitude prior
to the symbolic order based on a differentiation and non-identity between sig-
nifier and signified. Political desire, then, is established through the Name or
the coincidence of signifier and signified that is only set retroactively. The key
point Laclau is making here is that this Lacanian understanding of political
desire enables us to understanding desire in an way alternative to Freud's, the
latter being mass politics grounded in the love of an authoritarian leader who
represents the Imago of the father. In contrast, political desire grounded in the
utopic logic of the 'objet petit a' is characterized by the horizontal relations be-
tween brothers (and sisters, presumably).

Several criticisms can be made of Laclau's approach to populism. Critics have
drawn attention to its formalism stemming from its reliance on structural lin-
guistics in which signification is understood by way of a system of differences
with no positive terms. This formalist premise is the basis for his understanding

of the figure of the *people* as an empty signifier that can take on radically divergent contents. What the approach seems to elide is the diachronic continuity of this figure. The idea of 'the people' (*demos*) has a rich and semantically charged history stretching back to fifth century B.C. Athenian democracy, which surely must counter-balance the semiotic openness proposed by Laclau. While in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Laclau provides (with Mouffe) a genealogy of the concept of hegemony, in *On Populist Reason* he avoids providing the kind of account of the people that is, for example, sketched by Giorgio Agamben in *Homo Sacer* (Kraniauskas 2006).[21] Secondly, and relatedly, while Laclau is correct to take a sceptical attitude towards the class reductionism of Lukács and Althusser's notion of determination in the last instance by the 'economic,' does this necessitate understanding the social as marked by radical contingency? It seems that Laclau thinks *either* we must conceive of necessity in terms of a Hegelian or Marxian philosophy of history that offers the possibility of a closed historical totality in terms either of Absolute Spirit or Communism, *or* the social dissolves completely into an infinite, quasi-deconstructive play of radical difference.

   Turning to Marx's political writings, it is hard to maintain that the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (Marx 1979, 99–197) is an exemplar of 'class reductionism.' Rather, it is a very nuanced understanding of class struggle that works against the grain of any straightforward progressivist philosophy of history (Gandesha 2017b). Thirdly, Laclau also seems to downplay the role of institutions in historical change and continuity. Can we understand the mechanism of articulation other than through institutions such as the state, political parties, trades unions, and the whole host of organizations and associations that comprised what Gramsci called 'civil society,' which was, for him, the theatre of a 'war of position' or a cultural-ideological struggle? Finally, and most importantly for our purposes, the above questions are raised by the Freudian/Lacanian psychoanalysis upon which Laclau depends to ground his account of populism, in particular to rescue populism from the 'denigration of the masses' (205, 21–30) of figures like Gustav Le Bon. However, Laclau's engagement with Freudian social psychology must be regarded as a missed opportunity, since he ignores the problem that occupies such an important role in *Group Psychology and the Function of the Ego*, namely the phenomenon of the regression of the group to the primal horde. As John Kraniauskas argues:

> In Laclau's populist version, the former is no longer the authoritarian Father but just another brother, one among equals, and, as a model for thinking the hegemony of one equivalential claim among others, it is the means through which populist political identity is produced. (Kraniauskas 2006, 51)

The possibility of regression marks a key feature of psychoanalysis that Laclau struggles with in his account of populism, namely the manner in which the

'past weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living' – as Marx puts it in the *Brumaire* – and the closely related problem (for both Freud and Lacan) of the compulsion to repeat. Surely, to understand populism today (particularly its authoritarian form) it is necessary to come to terms precisely with such phenomena. In other words, from both ontogenic (relating to the individual) and phylogenic (relating to the species) perspectives, psychoanalysis understood not merely a formal model by which the equivalential articulation of differences is possible, but also substantively in terms of a method for working through the stubborn persistence of effects of past traumas, which is profoundly at odds with Laclau's seemingly voluntarist emphasis on the radical *contingency* of the social.

While Laclau is deeply indebted to a particular post-structuralist interpretation of Freud, he fails to take seriously the challenge that Freud poses to his discursive account of the social. For Laclau, society as an ontologically coherent space is an impossibility, but rather society is itself a function of articulation. In other words, Laclau's anti-reductionism is taken to its logical conclusion of denying the very possibility of certain minimal conditions shared by all societies, such as the necessity of the labour of material production and social reproduction. Yet the recognition of the necessity of work constitutes the basis for Freud's late understanding of the dynamics of civilization, repression, and the nature of the resentment that they generate. This hampers his ability to grasp the full force of Freud's contribution to social psychology which gives it a profoundly economic dimension both in the sense of the necessity of social labour as the basis for civilization and in the sense of the economics of libido, which is to say, cathexis.[22] In *Civilization and its Discontents* (1989), Freud makes clear the manner in which the 'narcissism of minor differences' of ethnic or national identity forms the basis for compensation for the demands of civilization. Such national identity finds expression in the figure of an authoritarian leader who is the object of love and the basis of group identity. By precluding such an understanding of Freud, Laclau is unable to come to terms with the way in which contemporary right-populism capitalizes on deeply authoritarian tendencies within neo-liberal capitalism.

Given the short-comings of both Norris and Inglehart on the one hand, and Ernesto Laclau on the other, it is necessary to build an account of populism that can integrate both explanations of economic and cultural insecurity via social psychological explanations. As Mudde puts it, 'Economic anxiety is socio-culturally translated' (Mudde 2017, 12). One tradition that is capable of doing so is that developed by the Frankfurt School starting from the 1930s, in their attempt to explain the rise of National Socialism in Germany.

3.3. Left and Right Populism

The problem of regression emerges again in terms of a resurgence of 'authoritarianism' to which the discipline of political science has paid increasing

attention since the early 1990s. A recent study by Matthew MacWilliams (2016) contends that the most significant predictor of support for Donald J. Trump is 'authoritarianism,' which he defines according to responses to a battery of four questions relating to child rearing.[23] The problem of authoritarianism in U.S. politics was first defined by the landmark study profoundly informed by Freudian psychoanalysis – especially *Group Psychology and the Function of the Ego* – by Theodor W. Adorno and his colleagues entitled *The Authoritarian Personality*[24] published in 1950. Motivated in part by a concern for the existence of authoritarian attitudes in the aftermath of the Second World War, and employing a unique synthesis of both European qualitative or interpretive and North American quantitative methods, the study used what it called the 'F-scale' (where F = Fascist), which could be boiled down to a measure for hostility to 'Otherness.' A key aspect of the theoretical framework of this study is that the institutional transformations of late capitalist society, particularly that of the family as a means of socialization, contributed to the conditions of regression. In other words, massification and the corresponding foreshortened space for individual initiative and judgment contributed to a propensity towards authoritarianism in the form of a relatively undisciplined Id, an over-developed Super Ego, and Ego weakness. Authoritarianism expressed itself, therefore, in an obsequious relation to authority and excessive cruelty towards those with comparatively less social power.

Just one year before the publication of *The Authoritarian Personality*, Leo Löwenthal and Norbert Guterman published their critical study of the figure of the American agitator, *Prophets of Deceit* (1970). The book amounts to a detailed analysis of the speeches of archetypical populist demagogues such as Father Coughlin, a contemporary of Huey Long, who can in some sense be regarded as a precursor to populist figures such as George Wallace and Donald Trump. Löwenthal and Guterman compare the agitator with two other types, all of which seek to address a prevailing socio-economic problem or crisis. While the latter two types strive to appeal to the Ego by providing a reasoned analysis of and program of action that can transform the situation so as to address the causes of the fear, anger and frustration of the people; the agitator, in marked contrast, appeals to the Id by inciting the crowd to express its emotions, which it then directs at the particular groups who are said to be responsible for the crisis.

Both studies are profoundly indebted to Horkheimer and Fromm's *Studien über Autorität und Familie* from the 1930s (Horkheimer et al. 1936; and also Horkheimer 2002) and to the first part Erich Fromm's essential book *Escape from Freedom* [1994] also more literally and aptly entitled *Fear of Freedom* outside North America). Initially published in 1941, the methodological appendix to the book ('Character and Social Process') was especially important insofar as it synthesized the Freudian account of the self (character) and the Marxian account of society (social process). What is of particular importance for our purposes are the implications for political theory. Well before Isaiah Berlin's

(1990) landmark discussion,[25] Fromm takes as his starting point the opposition between *negative* and *positive* conceptions of freedom. Generally speaking, one is free in the negative sense to the extent one faces comparatively few constraints on action. One is free in the positive sense to the degree to which one possesses the capacity for self-determination or rational self-legislation. One can be free in the first sense without necessarily being free in the second sense, although the reverse is not the case. That is, it is possible, for example, to live in a society that has a free market and also allows few opportunities for participation in self-governance. Fromm argues that a deepening of negative freedom (a reduction in traditional constraints facing individuals) is not an *unequivocal* good. Without a corresponding deepening of positive freedom (the possibility for self-governance) such an extension of the sphere of negative freedom could be understood as threatening and encourage precisely the form of regression Freud maps out in *Group Psychology and the Function of the Ego* (1990). Such an extension of negative freedom could be perceived as contributing to a feeling of powerlessness insofar as there would lack secondary bonds to replace the primary bonds represented by traditional institutions such as the family, community, and church. In other words, in liberty without democratic institutions for genuine self-determination, individuals allay their fear (perhaps the term anxiety is more appropriate) by subordinating themselves to an all-powerful, authoritarian figure. The love of this figure consolidates the social bond but also generates fear and hatred of those who remain outside of it.

It is possible to argue that neo-liberal globalization – while leading to certain benefits to millions of people in countries as diverse as India, Brazil, and China – has had over all a myriad of adverse effects. According to David Harvey (2007), neoliberalism comprises: 1) accumulation by dispossession; 2) deregulation; 3) privatization; and 4) an upward redistribution of wealth. It has increased both economic insecurity and cultural anxiety via three features in particular: the creation of surplus peoples, rising global inequality, and threats to identity.[26] The anxiety wrought by neoliberal globalization has created a rich and fertile ground for populist politics of both right and left along the lines suggested by Fromm. Neither Norris and Inglehart nor Laclau adequately account for such insecurity in their theorization of populism. As we have seen, populism can be understood as a mobilizing discourse that conceives of political subjectivity as comprised of 'the people.' Yet this figure of 'the people,' as Agamben has indicated (2000, 29–36) is deeply ambivalent insofar as it can be understood both in terms of the body politic as a whole (as in the U.S. Constitution's 'We the People'), or in terms of what Rancière calls the 'part that has no part,' (2010, 33) or the dispossessed and the displaced; as in 'The people united shall never be defeated,' or in the Black Panthers' famous slogan: 'All Power to the People.' In this dichotomy, the figure of 'the people' can be understood in terms of its differential deployments by right and left, which themselves must be understood in terms of the respective *enemies* through which 'the people' is constructed.

Right populism conflates 'the people' with an embattled nation confronting its external enemies: Islamic terrorism, refugees, the European Commission, the International Jewish conspiracy, and so on. The Left, in marked contrast, defines 'the people' in relation to the social structures and institutions – for example, state and capital – that thwart its aspirations for self-determination; a construction which does not, however, preclude hospitality towards the Other. In other words, while right-wing or authoritarian populism defines the enemy in personalized terms; while this is not always true, left-wing populism tends to define the enemy in terms of bearers of socio-economic structures and rarely as particular groups.[27] While the right, in a tradition stemming back to Hobbes (2017), takes insecurity and anxiety as the necessary, unavoidable, and indeed favourable product of capitalist social relations, and transforms such insecurity and anxiety into the fear of the stranger[28] and an argument for a punitive state, the left seeks to provide an account of the sources of such insecurity, in the processes that have led to the dismantling of the welfare state, and corresponding phenomena such as 'zero-hours' contracts, the casualization of labour, and generalized precarity, and proposes concrete policy solutions to these. Of course, left populism can also turn authoritarian – largely due to the interference and threatened military intervention of the global hegemon and its allies – with an increasing vilification of the opposition, as we are seeing today in Venezuela and Ecuador with Rafel Correa.

3.3.1. The Problem of Human Rights

Putting aside the kind of scepticism towards human rights voiced by Hannah Arendt (1976, 267–234) – not to mention that which has been engendered by the weaponization of human rights discourse by the neo-conservatives in the George W. Bush administration – the question arises as to the relation between populism and human rights. Human rights is to be understood not just in terms of the various UN conventions on Human Rights dating back to 1948 with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but also in terms of its origins in the Magna Carta (1215) limiting sovereign power, and the American and French Revolutionary experiences in the late eighteenth century (which were grounded in the European Enlightenment). According to Amartya Sen, human rights can be understood to secure the freedom of the person and can be further differentiated into a) *capability* or a person's 'opportunity to achieve valuable combinations of human functionings' (2004, 333). This is balanced by b) '*process* or the fairness or equity with which persons are treated' (2004, 336). In other words, the latter can be understood in terms of primary human rights establishing conditions under which human beings are 'simply left alone' (Cranston) and the former as secondary rights such as social and economic.

Because right-populism purports to manifest – often through its charismatic leader – the general will or the will of the people, it presents a clear threat to

both individual and group rights. It raises again the spectre of the democratic demagogue as had worried Plato (1961) in the fourth century BCE, or the 'tyranny of the majority' as had troubled Alexis de Tocqueville (2000) and J.S. Mill (1978) in the nineteenth century. In keeping with a Conservative tradition indebted to Burke and the European counter-Enlightenment with figures such as Joseph de Maistre, Julius Evola, Carl Schmitt, and others, right-populism evinces an attack on the legacy of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution in general, and the doctrine of human rights in particular. Moreover, as I've emphasized in this paper, populism is based upon the opposition between the people on the one side, and the power bloc on the other. Right populism typically defines the enemy in personalist terms. If right-wing populism could be said to exhibit an underlying logic, it would be that it transforms the social *stranger* into the political *enemy* (Gandesha 2003, 1–7). In other words, the stranger can be said to represent a threat at both socio-economic and cultural levels and thus is metonymic – the part that stands for the whole – for globalization anxieties. The stranger is transformed into the political enemy insofar as this figure is made to condense such anxieties into an object of fear (Neumann 2017).

Left populism's relation to human rights is more complicated and is closely related to Marxist theory and historical practice of 'formerly existing' socialism. From the standpoint of practice, socialism's record on human rights has been a chequered one to say the least. From a theoretical perspective, in the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels explicitly state that under socialism the freedom of each would be conditional upon the freedom of all and vice-versa (1998). At the same time, because Marx eschewed speculating on future political arrangements, he arguably never thought through carefully enough the role of rights within a post-capitalist order, leaving Marxism with a considerable 'political' deficit and this can be seen as a serious failing (Stedman Jones 2016). As Miguel Abansour points out, however, Marx in his somewhat overlooked 1843 'Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*,' (Marx and Engels – not to be confused with the 1844 'Introduction' to 'Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right') doesn't disavow constitutionalism but articulates a republican understanding of 'true democracy,' arguing that the people (the *demos*) must be understood as the ongoing author of its own constitution (Abansour 2011). Socialism, in other words, represents not an abstract but a determinate negation of bourgeois rights and freedoms – not a simple cancelling but a *cancelling* and *preserving*. Such a determinate negation can be understood in terms of a preservation of the sphere of negative freedoms or freedom from state coercion, while also providing the basis for positive freedom or self-determination. In fact, an emphasis on human rights understood only in a negative sense – in terms of purely formal rights – without rights understood in a more positive sense (the difference between freedom as opportunity and freedom as exercise) can be self-undermining. In other words,

human rights without a genuine democratization of social life could continue to create the conditions under which authoritarian forms of populism continue to multiply and thrive.

Notes

1   This chapter was originally presented as a paper at the American Political Science Association Meetings in San Francisco, August, 2017. I am grateful to discussant, Guillermina Seri's comments, Lars Rensmann's constructive input at the session and John Abromeit's and Jeremiah Morelock's very helpful comments on a previous draft of the chapter.

2   'Neoliberalism' has generated an enormous literature. David Harvey, for example, defines neoliberalism as comprising three distinct dimensions: an intensified 'accumulation by dispossession,' an upward redistribution of wealth, deregulation, and privatization. In his late lectures on biopolitics, Michel Foucault (2010) understands neoliberalism via Nietzsche in terms of governmentality or which he defines as 'the conduct of conduct.' Neoliberalism is geared to downloading responsibilities that had once been the purview of the state to the individual who must now take up an entrepreneurial relationship to oneself. Building on this account, Wendy Brown (2017) suggests that neoliberalism represents the transformation of the *homo politicus* into *homo economicus*. We understand neoliberalism in terms of a reorientation of the state along market principles – the state becomes geared to the maximization of individual utility.

3   See Habermas' *Theory of Communicative Action Vol II*, where both the social subsystems of state and economy are the spheres of strategic rationality as opposed to the communicative rationality of the meaning-saturated sphere of the social lifeworld.

4   In among other books *On Populist Reason* (London: Verso, 2006).

5   In some ways, this is similar to the argument made recently by Carol Anderson in thesis that we can understand the Trump phenomenon as the culmination of 'White rage' or a white backlash against the Obama Presidency. See her Anderson (2016).

6   See Max Horkheimer and T.W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, chapter 'The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception' and Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* but also Theodor W. Adorno 'Freudian Theory and the Structure of Fascist Propaganda' as well the film by Adam Curtis, *Century of the Self,* which documents the role of Edward Bernays, Freud's nephew, in single-handedly inventing the field of 'Public Relations' and its impact on public affairs.

7   Benjamin Moffitt, *The Global Rise of Populism: Performance, Political Style, and Representation* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016).

8   https://www.socialeurope.eu/immigration-policy-turn-danish-social-democratic-case

9   Elsewhere, I have sought to understand this in psychoanalytical terms as an 'identification with the aggressor.' See Samir Gandesha 'The Neo-Liberal Personality,' in *Logos* Journal http://logosjournal.com/2017/the-neoliberal-personality/

10   In a sense this is successor to the earlier debate between the priority of the good versus the priority of right.

11   Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, (Cambridge, MA.: Belknap Press, 2013). See also Walter Benn Michaels, *The Trouble with Diversity: How We Learned to Love Identity and Ignore Inequality.* New York: Metropolitan, 2006 and Adolph Reed Jr. *Without Justice for All: The New Liberalism and Our Retreat from Racial Equality.* Westview Press, 2001.

12   Incidentally, the right-wing backlash, if we wish to call it that, in Germany is one directed not against cultural change per se insofar as Angela Merkel stated clear that 'Deutschland ist kein 'multikulti' Land' but rather her liberal refugee policy. In her view, such a policy simply upholds Germany's commitments under international law.

13   This was, in fact, the strategy of Canada's Conservative Party in the election of 2011 which saw it forming a majority government for the first time since the merger of the populist Reform-Canadian Alliance and the establishment Progressive Conservative Party.

14   Yet it is questionable that what we see is a consistent demographic picture insofar as one of the key aspects of Trump's popularity has to do with the rise of the Alt-Right, internet sites such as 4-Chan and Breitbart news all of which have politicized a new generation of white men who are susceptible to the proliferation of propaganda via new media. Right-wing populism in Europe such as Pediga, the EDL, and other populist movements have also attracted younger followers.

15   Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in an Age of Colour Blindness.* New York: New Press, 2012.

16   Gramsci describes the hegemonic moment in the following way:

> A third moment is that in which one becomes aware that one's own corporate interests, in their present and future development, transcend the corporate limits of the purely economic class, and can and must become the interests of other subordinate groups too. This is the most purely political phase, and marks the decisive passage from the structure to the sphere of the complex superstructures ; it is the phase in which previously germinated ideologies become 'party', come into confrontation and conflict, until only one of them, or at least a single combination of them, tends to prevail, to gain the upper-hand, to propagate itself throughout society-bringing about not only a unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity, posing all the

questions around which the struggle rages not on a corporate but on a 'universal' plane, and thus creating the hegemony of a fundamental social group over a series of subordinate groups. It is true that the State is seen as the organ of one particular group, destined to create favourable conditions for the latter's maximum expansion. But the development and expansion of the particular group are conceived of, and presented, as being the motor force of a universal expansion, of a development of all the 'national' energies. In other words, the dominant group is coordinated concretely with the general interests of the subordinate groups, and the life of the State is conceived of as a continuous process of formation and superseding of unstable equilibria (on the juridical plane) between the interests of the fundamental group and those of the subordinate groups-equilibria in which the interests of the dominant group prevail, but only up to a certain point, i.e. stopping short of narrowly corporate economic interest. (Gramsci 1996, 180–81)

[17] Georg Lukàcs, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics.* Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1972, and Louis Althusser, *For Marx.* (London: Verso, 2006.

[18] *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (London: Verso, 1977).

[19] What's also important, and brilliant, about Laclau's first book on populism, is his argument that early twentieth-century socialist parties focused too narrowly on the working class as the subject of revolution and ignored the progressive traditions of nineteenth-century democratic movements, which left it to the fascists to appropriate these traditions in their own perverted ways. Schmitt's appropriation of Rousseau, or Gentile's appropriation of Mazzini are exemplary in this regard. The left needed a politics that was both socialist and democratic.

[20] (London: Verso, 1985).

[21] John Kraniauskas, 'Critique of Pure Politics,' *Radical Philosophy*, 136 (March/April 2006): 51.

[22] See Eli Mandel, *Political Freud: A History.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2015 and Samo Tomsic's *Capitalist Unconscious: Marx and Lacan* (London: Verso, 2015)

[23] The questions pertain to 'whether it is more important for the voter to have a child who is respectful or independent; obedient or self-reliant; well-behaved or considerate; and well-mannered or curious.' Voters who pick the first of the two answers incline towards authoritarianism. Politico.com

[24] T.W. Adorno et al. *The Authoritarain Personality* (New York: Norton, 1993)

[25] 'Two Conceptions of Liberty,' in *Four Essays on Liberty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[26] See, for example, Zygmunt Baumann's *Liquid Modernity.* https://revise sociology.com/2016/08/09/zygmunt-bauman-liquid-times-summary/

[27] The two can, of course, run together occasionally as in, for example, 'Worldview' Marxism's criticism of capitalism from the standpoint of concrete

labour in the figure of the banker or 'finance capital' which is often the metonymic representation of the Jew.

[28] Samir Gandesha, 'The Political Semiosis of Populism' *Semiotic Review of Books*, 2003.

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CHAPTER 4

Donald Trump as Authoritarian Populist: A Frommian Analysis

Douglas Kellner

In this article, I discuss in detail how Erich Fromm's categories can help describe Trump's character, or 'temperament,' a word used to characterize a major flaw in Trump in the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign and his rule as President by the end of the first year. In *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (1973), Fromm engages in a detailed analysis of the authoritarian character as sadistic, excessively narcissistic, malignantly aggressive, vengeably destructive, and necrophiliac, personality traits arguably applicable to Trump. In the following analysis, I will systematically deploy key Frommian socio-psychoanalytic categories to Trump and his followers to show how they can illuminate Trump and authoritarian populism.[1]

Trump, in Freudian terms used by Fromm, can be seen as the **Id** of American politics, often driven by sheer aggression, narcissism, and, rage. If someone criticizes him, they can be sure of being attacked back, often brutally.[2] And notoriously, Trump exhibits the most gigantic and unrestrained **Ego** yet seen in U.S. politics constantly trumping his wealth, his success in business, how smart he is, how women and all the people who work for him love him so much, and how his book *The Art of the Deal* (1987/2005) is the greatest book ever written – although just after saying that to a Christian evangelical audience, he backtracked and said The Bible is the greatest book, but that his *Art of the Deal* is

the second greatest, which for Trump is the bible of how to get rich and maybe how to win elections.

Trump, however, like classical Fascist leaders, arguably has an underdeveloped **Superego**, in the Freudian sense that generally refers to a voice of social morality and conscience. While Trump has what we might call a highly developed Social Ego that has fully appropriated capitalist drives for success, money, power, ambition, and domination, biographies of Trump indicate that he has had few life-long friends, discards women with abandon (he is on his third marriage), and brags of his ruthlessness in destroying competitors and enemies.[3]

Drawing on Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* (1941) and other writings, and studies of *The Authoritarian Personality* done by the Frankfurt School (Adorno et al. 1950), Trump obviously fits the Critical Theory model of an authoritarian character and his 2016 Presidential campaign replicates in some ways the submission to the leader and the movement found in authoritarian populism. The Frankfurt School undertook in the 1930s studies of the **authoritarian personality** and Fascism, although I would argue that Trump is not Hitler and his followers are not technically fascists.[4] As I indicate in the Preface to this volume, Trump had neither the well-articulated party apparatus, nor the full-blown ideology of the Nazis, and thus more resembles the phenomena of **authoritarian populism** or **neofascism** which we can use to explain Trump and his supporters.

While Trump does not have a party apparatus or ideology like the Nazis, parallels to authoritarian movements appeared clear to me watching a TV broadcast on 21 August 2015, of Trump's mega-rally in Mobile, Alabama. I watched all afternoon as the cable news networks broadcast nothing but Trump, hyping up his visit to a stadium where he was expecting 30–40,000 spectators, the biggest rally of the season. Although only 20-some thousand showed up, which was still a 'huge' event in the heat of summer before the primaries had even begun in earnest, Trump's flight into Alabama on his own Trump Jet and his rapturous reception by his admirers became the main story of the news cycle, as did many such daily events in what the media called 'the summer of Trump' (see Kellner 2016b).

What I focused on in watching the TV footage of the event was how the networks began showing repeated images of Trump flying his airplane over and around the stadium before landing and then cut away to big images of the Trump Jet every few minutes. This media spectacle reminded me of one of the most powerful propaganda films of all time – Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* – a German Nazi propaganda film of 1935. *Triumph* focuses on Hitler flying in an airplane through the clouds, looking out the window at the crowds below, landing, and driving through mass crowds applauding him as his proceeded through the streets of Nuremburg for a mass rally. The crowds along the way and in the stadium greeted Hitler with rapture as he entered the spectacle

of a highly touted and orchestrated Nuremburg mass Nazi rally that Riefenstahl captured on film.

I do not know if the Trump operatives planned this parallel, or if it was just a coincidence, but it is clear that Trump, like Hitler, has organized a fervent mass movement outside of the conventional political party apparatuses. The **anger and rage** that Fromm attributed to Nazi masses in *Escape From Freedom* (1941) is also exhibited in Trump's followers as is the **idolatry** toward their Fuhrer, who arguably see Trump as the **magic helper** who will solve their problems by building a giant wall to keep out the threatening Other, a Fairy Tale scenario that Fromm would have loved to deconstruct.

Trump's behavior during the 2016 election campaign and the first year of his presidency reveals the pathological symptoms of the authoritarian character analysed by Fromm (1941, 1973). Trump clearly exhibits traits of the **sadist** who Fromm described as 'a person with an intense desire to control, hurt, humiliate, another person,' a trait that is one of the defining feature of the authoritarian personality' (1973). Frommian sadism was exemplified in Trump's behavior toward other Republican Party candidates in primary debates, in his daily insults of all and sundry, and at Trump rallies in the behavior of him and his followers toward protestors. During the 2016 campaign cycle, a regular feature of a Trump rally involved Trump supporters yelling at, hitting, and even beating up protestors, while Trump shouts 'get them out! Out!'. When one Trump follower sucker punched a young African American protestor in a campaign event at Fayetteville, NC on 9 March 2016, Trump offered to pay his legal expenses.

Despite the accelerating violence at Trump rallies during the summer of 2016, and intense pressure for Trump to renounce violence at his campaign events and reign in his rowdy followers, Trump deflected blame on protestors and continued to exhibit the joy of a sadist controlling his environment and inflicting pain on his enemies, as police and his followers continued to attack and pummel protestors at his events. When Trump's campaign manager Corey Lewandowski was charged with assault on a reporter, Trump continued to defend him, although Lewandowski was fired when the Trump campaign brought in veteran political hired gun Paul Manafort, who had served dictators like Angolan terrorist Jonas Savimbi, the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence with notorious al-Qaeda links, Ukrainian dictator and Putin ally Viktor Yanukovych, foreign dictators such as Ferdinand Marcos and Joseph Mobuto of Zaire, and many more of the Who's Who list of toxic dictators and world-class rogues (among whom one must number Manafort). Apparently, involved in a power struggle within the Trump campaign with Manafort, Lewandowski was fired and has been subpoenaed by Special Counsel Robert Mueller who is investigating crime and possible conspiracy with Russians in the 2016 election.

Fromm's analysis of the **narcissistic** personality in *The Sane Society* (1955) and *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* helps explain the Trump phenomenon,

given that Trump is one of the most narcissistic figures to appear in recent U.S. politics. For Fromm: 'Narcissism is the essence of all severe psychic pathology. For the narcissistically involved person, there is only one reality: that of his own thought processes, feelings and needs. The world outside is not experienced or perceived objectively, i.e., as existing in its own terms, conditions and needs' (Fromm 1955, 36). Michael D'Antonio in his book *Never Enough: Donald Trump and the Pursuit of Success* sees Trump as the exemplification of the 'culture of narcissism' described by Christopher Lasch and notes:

> Trump was offered as a journalist's paragon of narcissism at least as far back as 1988. The academics and psychologists got involved a few years later would go on to make the diagnosis of Trump into a kind of professional sport. Trump makes an appearance in texts for the profession, including *Abnormal Behavior in the 21st Century* and *Personality Disorders and Older Adults: Diagnosis, Assessment, and Treatment.* He also appears in books for laypeople such as *The Narcissism Epidemic: Loving in the Age of Entitlement; Help! I'm in Love with a Narcissist;* and *When you Love a Man Who Loves Himself.*[5]

Trump's extreme narcissism is evident in his obsession with putting his name on his buildings or construction sites, ranging from Trump Towers to (now failed) casinos in New Jersey to golf courses throughout the world. Yet Trump often fails, as in his attempt in 1979 to get a New York convention centre named after his father, or his failure to get a football stadium named the Trumpdome, in an unsuccessful endeavour in the mid-1980s, when Trump, first, was blocked from getting an NFL football team, and then saw the USFL football league in which he had a team collapse (Barrett 2016, 342ff).[6] Indeed, Trump supporters should read the Trump biographies to discover the grubby details of all of Trump's failed projects, including a string of casinos in New Jersey and at least four major bankruptcies in businesses that he ran into the ground, since Trump grounds his claims for the presidency on the alleged success of his business ventures (Barrett 2016; D'Antonio 2015; O'Donnell and Rutherford 1991).

   Although Trump presents himself as the People's Choice and voice of the Forgotten Man, Trump himself has been especially exploitative of his workers, and in his life style and habitus lives in a radically different world than the hoi polloi. For example, in 1985, Trump bought a 118-room mansion in Palm Beach, Florida Mar-A-Lago that he immediately opened for TV interview segments and that launched Donald's second career as a frequent star of 'Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous.' Trump became an exemplar of what Thorstein Veblen described as 'conspicuous consumption' (1899/1994), a trait that the Donald continues to cultivate to excess up to the present. Indeed, Trump has been particularly assiduous in branding the Trump name and selling himself as a celebrity and leader his entire adult life.

Another conceptual key to Trump's authoritarian personality is found in Fromm's analysis of 'malignant aggression' developed in *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (1973). Trump arguably embodies both spontaneous and 'bound in character structure' aspects of what Fromm characterizes as malignant aggression (270ff), spontaneously lashing out at anyone who dares to criticize him, and arguably his deep-rooted extremely aggressive tendencies help characterize Trump and connect him to classic authoritarian leaders. Trump typically describes his opponents as 'losers,' and uses extremely hostile language in attacking all of his opponents and critics. In his TV reality show *The Apprentice* (2005–2015), which features a group of competitors battling for a high-level management job in one of Trump's organizations, each segment ended with Trump triumphantly telling one of the contestants that 'you're fired!' – a telling phrase that Trump filed for a trademark in 2004, and which revealed his sadistic joy in controlling and destroying individuals.

As Henry Giroux argues (2016), 'loser' for Trump 'has little to do with them losing in the more general sense of the term. On the contrary, in a culture that trades in cruelty and divorces politics from matters of ethics and social responsibility, 'loser' is now elevated to a pejorative insult that humiliates and justifies not only symbolic violence, but also (as Trump has made clear in many of his rallies) real acts of violence waged against his critics, such as members of the Movement for Black Lives.' 'Loser' means exclusion, humiliation, and abjection, a trope prevalent in sports, business, and politics where 'winners take all' and losers are condemned to the ignominy of failure, the ultimate degradation in Trump's amoral capitalist universe.

Hence, I would argue that both Trump's TV reality show *The Apprentice* and Trump's behavior on the show and in public embody Frommian analysis of malignant aggression. Indeed, it was not enough for Trump to defeat his Republican Party opponents in the 2016 Presidential election, but he attempted to destroy them. Trump described his initial major opponent Jeb Bush as 'low energy' and gloated as Jeb failed to gain support in the primaries and dropped out of the race early. Rubio was dismissed as 'little Marco,' Cruz disparaged as 'Lyin' Ted,' and as for the hapless Ben Carson, Trump tweeted: 'With Ben Carson wanting to hit his mother on head with a hammer, stab a friend and [claiming that Egyptian] Pyramids [were] built for grain storage – don't people get it?' Curiously, despite these malignant insults, the ineffable Carson endorsed Trump after he dropped out of the race, and entered his cabinet as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Already during the primary campaign, Trump began referring to Hillary Clinton as 'Crooked Hillary,' and by the time of the Republican National Convention his audiences shouted out 'lock her up' whenever Trump used the phrase. In a Pavolovian gesture, Trump has his troops orchestrated to perform in rituals of aggression, as, for instance, when he refers to the wall he promises to build on the Mexican border, and calls to his audience, 'who's gonna pay,' the audience shouts out in a booming unison: 'Mexico!'

In fact, Trump's attitudes and behavior toward women exhibit traits of Fromm's malignant aggression, as well as blatant sexism. The day after the initial Republican debate on 6 August 2015, Trump complained about Fox News debate moderator Megyn Kelly, whining: 'She gets out and she starts asking me all sorts of ridiculous questions. You could see there was blood coming out of her eyes, blood coming out of her wherever (Arana 2016). As outrage over Trump's comment spread, he took to Twitter to deny that he meant to imply Kelly was menstruating, claiming in a Tweet: 'Mr. Trump made Megyn Kelly look really bad – she was a mess with her anger and totally caught off guard. Mr. Trump said 'blood was coming out of her eyes and whatever' meaning nose, but wanted to move on to more important topics. Only a deviant would think anything else' (op. cit). Trump's appalling reference to Megyn Kelly's blood is paralleled by his off-colour comments about Hillary Clinton ranting that her use of the bathroom during a Democratic Party debate was 'too disgusting' to talk about – 'disgusting, really disgusting,' he repeated. He also delighted in recounting how Ms Clinton got 'schlonged' by Barack Obama when she lost to him in the 2008 Democratic primary.

Trump's aggressive and compulsive Tweets and daily insults against his opponent exemplify the 'vengeful destructiveness' described by Fromm as part of malignant aggression, which is another defining trait of the authoritarian leader. As an example of Trump's propensities toward vengeful destructiveness, take Trump's remarks toward Judge Gonzalo Curiel's Mexican heritage who Trump claimed had an 'Absolute Conflict' in being unable to rule impartially in a fraud lawsuit against Donald Trump's now defunct real estate school, Trump University, because he was Mexican-American. Trump claimed that the Mexican-American heritage of the judge, who was born in Indiana to Mexican immigrants, was relevant because of Trump's campaign stance against illegal immigration and his pledge to seal the southern U.S. border with Mexico. Despite the fact that the Judge was ruling on a case involving Trump University, the Donald just couldn't help making nasty vengeful and destructive remarks against the Judge, who was a highly respected jurist and who was widely defended by the legal community against Trump's attack.

Further, Trump threatened the Republican Party in March 2016 with riots at its summer convention if there was any attempt to block his nomination, and in August 2016 as his poll numbers fell and Hillary Clinton was widening her lead, Trump claimed that the election was 'rigged' and that his followers may riot if he doesn't win (Voorhees 2016). Throughout the Republican primaries, Trump threatened the Republican Party with destruction if they attempted to block his candidacy in any way, just as he consistently attacked and threatened any media outlet or individual who criticized him and aroused his fire. The spectre of a Republican Party candidate attacking the party that nominated him and its chief media propaganda apparatus, *Fox News*, exhibits, I believe, an out of control malignant aggression and vengeful destructiveness syndrome.

Indeed, although Trump made it through a chaotic 2016 Republican National Convention and was proclaimed their official party candidate, even after beating his maligned and deeply insulted opponents in the Republican primary contest, Trump continued his defamations in even more destructive and offensive discourse. As Maureen Dowd (2016) pointed out Jeb Bush was '"a one day kill" as a gloating Trump put it, with the "low energy" taunt. "Liddle Marco" and "Lyin' Ted" bit the dust. "One-for-38 Kasich" fell by the wayside.' And after John Kasich refused to intend the Republican convention crowning Trump, even though it was held in a city in which he is governor, and after Ted Cruz told delegates to vote their consciences in the election, as a dig at Donald, a bitter Trump proclaimed on numerous weekend TV interviews after the convention that he was considering raising over $10 million dollar funds to assure his Republican nemeses defeat in their next election campaigns.[7]

More astonishing, after Trump lashed out against a Muslim family that had lost its son in military service and testified to their loss and disgust at Trump's attacks on Muslims at a much-discussed moment in the Democratic National convention, Trump attacked the family, targeting the grieving mother who had stood as a silent witness beside her husband and whose silence he attacked as evidence that Muslims didn't let women speak in public. Trump's attacks on the Khan family continued for days after the convention and when major Republicans distanced themselves from Trump's rancorous and vile comments, Trump proclaimed on August 2 that he was not endorsing Republican House Leader Paul Ryan, former Presidential candidate John McCain, and others who had criticized him, thus threatening to blow apart the Republican Party – driving Party leaders to declare that they were staging an 'intervention' with Trump over the weekend to try to persuade their candidate to act more 'presidential' and to stop attacking Republican leaders – a gesture his base seems to love.[8]

Demonstrating his deeply rooted and uncontrollable malignant aggression, Trump had what observers saw as the worst week of his campaign in early August 2016 as he continued to malign the Khan family, praised Vladimir Putin and called on the Russian strongman to hack Hillary Clinton's email, refused until the last moment to endorse fellow Republicans Ryan and McCain, threw a crying baby and its mother out of one of his rallies, and continued to make crazy off-the-cuff remarks. Topping off his going over the top, on 9 August 2016 in a rally at Wilmington, North Carolina, Trump appeared to suggest that gun rights supporters might take matters into their own hands if Hillary Clinton is elected President and appoints Judges who favour stricter gun control measures. Repeating the lie that Clinton wanted to abolish the right to bear arms, Trump warned that: 'If she gets to pick her judges, nothing you can do, folks,' Mr. Trump said, as the crowd began to boo. He quickly added: 'Although the Second Amendment people – maybe there is, I don't know.'

Some members of the audience visibly winced and for the next several days the news cycle was dominated by discussion that Trump had suggested that

'Second Amendment' people (i.e. gun owners) might have to take the law into their own hands if Clinton was elected, raising the spectre of political assassination and reminding people of the wave of political assassinations in the 1960s of JFK, RFK, and Martin Luther King, and assassination attempts against Presidents Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan. Democrats, gun control advocates, and others, accused Trump of possibly inciting violence against Hillary Clinton or liberal Justices. Bernice A. King, daughter of the Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr, called Mr. Trump's words 'distasteful, disturbing, dangerous,' and many other prominent Americans denounced Trumps dangerous rabble-rousing as further evidence that he was not fit to be President of the United States (Corasaniti and Haberman 2016).

As usual, Trump and his surrogates spun Trump's statements and attacked the media for twisting his meaning, and other Republicans like Paul Ryan dismissed it as a bad joke, but it was clear that this was further evidence that Trump was seriously unbalanced and highly dangerous. The extremely destructive behavior typical of Trump's entire campaign and the first year of his presidency leads me to suggest that Fromm's analysis of the 'necrophilic' as an extreme form of malignant aggression also applies to Trump. Fromm illustrates the concept of the necrophilic personality through an extensive study of Hitler as the paradigmatic of a highly destructive authoritarian personality, as he did a study of Himmler to illustrate his concept of the sadistic personality (Fromm 1973). Fromm argues that the 'necrophilic transforms all life into things, including himself and the manifestations of his human faculties of reason, seeing, hearing, tasting, loving. Sexuality become a technical skill ('the love machine'); feelings are flattened and sometimes substituted for by sentimentality; joy, the expression of intense aliveness, is replaced by '"fun" or excitement; and whatever love and tenderness man has is directed toward machines and gadgets' (Fromm 1973, 325ff).

In Fromm's analysis, the necrophilic personality type is fundamentally empty, needing to fill themselves with ever more acquisitions, conquests, or victories. Hence, it is no accident that the still best single book on Trump by Michael D'Antonio (2015) is titled *Never Enough: Donald Trump and the Pursuit of Success*. Trump's need for adoration and his malignant and destructive rage at all criticism and opposition shows an extremely disordered personality who constitutes a grave danger to the United States and the world.

The necrophilic personality fills his emptiness with sadism, aggression, amassing wealth and power, and is prone to violence and self-destruction. Accounts of Trump's business dealings and entanglements with women show an incredible recklessness. When his first two marriages were unravelling, Trump carried out well-publicized affairs and seemed to revel in all the dirty publicity, no matter how demeaning. Likewise, in the 1990s when his business empire was spectacularly unravelling, Trump continued to make risky investments, put himself in impossible debt (with the help of banks who were taken in by his myth as a business man), and conned business associates, financial institutions and the public at large as he spiralled into near bankruptcy.[9]

Trump's destructive aspects were at the heart of his run for the presidency. Revealingly, Trump's initial 'argument' for his presidency was to build a wall to keep immigrants from pouring over our southern border along with a promise to arrest all 'illegal immigrants' and send them back over the border, a highly destructive (and probably impossible) action that would tear apart countless families. Trump promised to totally destroy ISIS and threatened to bring back waterboarding 'and worse, much much worse!' he shouted repeatedly at his rallies and in interviews, although some Generals and military experts pointed out that Trump could not order troops or other Americans to break international law.

Hence, the peril and threats we face in the Trump presidency raise the issue of what does it mean to have an arguably sadistic, excessively narcissistic, malignantly aggressive, vengeably destructive, and necrophilic individual like Trump as President of the United States? If Trump indeed fits Fromm's criteria of the malignantly aggressive and necrophilic personality, this should be upsetting and raise some serious questions about Trump. Fromm was obsessed for decades about the danger of nuclear war and would no doubt be extremely disturbed at the thought of the Donald having his itchy finger on nuclear weapons launching – as Trump threatened in Fall 2017 against North Korea who he threatened to totally destroy North Korea with 'fire and fury.'

Indeed, the Trump presidency has revealed Trump as the most narcissistic individual ever to sit in the White House whose multiple daily tweets tout his greatness and bully and attack his opponents. He revealed malignant aggression in his presidency from the first day in which he called for a Muslim ban from selected countries (where he had no business interests, see Kellner 2017) – a decision quickly overturned by courts. His executive orders undoing progressive legislation and regulations established by the Obama administration exhibit his malignant drive to destroy U.S. liberal democracy, as does his daily attacks on the media, Congress, the judiciary, and whoever dares to criticize King Donald the Dumbass.

Hence, Frommian categories applied to Trump help illuminate why Donald Trump is so chaotic, dangerous, and destructive, and how risky it was to even contemplate Trump being President of the United States in these dangerous times. It is also worrisome to contemplate that Trump has developed a large and rowdy following through his demagoguery and that authoritarian populism constitutes a clear and present danger to U.S. democracy and global peace and well-being.

Notes

[1] An earlier, pre-election, version of this study was published in Kellner 2016a. I updated the article carrying the analysis through the first year of Trump's presidency.

2 See Freud 1923/1990. For Freud, the Id represents the irrational and aggressive components of the personality, while the Ego represents the rational self which can suffer, however, narcissistic tendencies that undercut its rationality. We shall see below how Fromm builds on Freud's psychoanalytic categories in ways that they can be applied to demagogues like Hitler and Trump and mass movements of authoritarian populism, or neofascism. For an overview of Fromm's life and works, see Funk 2003.

3 See D'Antonio 2015 and Blair 2000. The chapter on 'Born to Compete' in Blair 2000, 223ff., documents Trump's competitiveness and drive for success at an early age.

4 See Kellner 2016b and 2017.

5 D'Antonio, op. cit. California Congresswoman Karen Bass (D-Cal) began a petition to request that mental health professionals evaluate Trump for Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD), insisting that he had all the symptoms. See Wayne Rojas, 'Karen Bass Wants Mental Health Professionals to Evaluate Trump. Calif. Democrat suspects GOP nominee has Narcissistic Personality Disorder', Rollcall, 3 August 2016 at http://www.rollcall.com/news/politics/karen-bass-wants-mental-health-professionals-to-evaluate-trump#sthash.75ABMmmT.dpuf (accessed 2 August 2016). On the traits of Narcissistic Personality Disorder and how Trump embodies them, see Blum 2016.

6 Perhaps vengeful narcissist Trump's early failures to make it in the NFL explains the virulence and persistence of his tirades against the NFL in Fall/Winter 2017, although these tirades are overdetermined by his racial animus against African Americans who have largely been the focus of his NFL attacks to the delight of his racist base.

7 On Trumps' threat to form 'Anti-certain candidate PACs' to defeat those Republicans who opposed him, see Phillip Rucker's interview with Trump appended to Cilizza 2016.

8 The intervention did not take place, but Trump did endorse Ryan and McCain reading his tepid endorsement from note cards and not looking directly up into the camera, signaling that he lacked enthusiasm and was making the endorsements under duress.

9 For an account of both Trump's marriage and financial disasters, see Blair 2000, 385–452.

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Foundations of Authoritarianism

CHAPTER 5

From Modernity to Bigotry

Stephen Eric Bronner

Karl Marx once quipped that 'violence is the midwife of every old society preg-
nant with a new one' (Marx 1967, 751). Just as surely, however, prejudice is the
midwife of violence. The bigot embraced this view from the start. Hatred of the
Jews goes back to Egypt and Babylonia. Contempt for what the Greeks consid-
ered the 'barbarian' – whoever was not of Greece – existed even at the height of
the classical period. And Homer already understood the struggles of the outcast
and the stranger. What today might be termed ethnic or racial conflicts between
empires, religions, tribes, and clans have always shaped the historical landscape.

But there is a sense in which modernity created the bigot. Prior to the dem-
ocratic revolutions of the eighteenth century, perfectly decent people simply
accepted prevailing prejudices as a matter of course. They suffered no oppro-
brium. Even in early twentieth-century America, few people (other than the
targets of prejudice) were especially bothered that major-league baseball ad-
mitted only whites, that the armed forces were segregated, that rape and incest
were barely mentioned, and that the white male was the standard by which
intelligence was judged. The bigot of today, in recalling the jokes and everyday
humiliations that these groups endured, seeks to recreate the normality of prej-
udice. That subaltern groups have proven so successful in resisting his project
only intensifies his frustration.

Modernity, with its roots in the European Enlightenment and the democratic
revolutions that extended from 1688 to 1789, runs counter to the institutions

and beliefs that the bigot holds dear. Its new capitalist production process substitutes exploitation for his hatred. It has little use for established prejudices, revealed truths, or sacred traditions. And its commitment to principles like the liberal rule of law and toleration, Republican institutions, and universal rights would inspire attempts by women, people of colour, religious minorities, and gays to constrict the arbitrary exercise of authority by church and state.

Modernity liberated the powers of humanity; it generated the idea that people could shape their own fates. This is very different from the bigot's assumption that biology or anatomy is destiny. Modernity relies on the growth of science, technology, and instrumental rationality. What was once taken on faith is now subject to criticism and what was once shrouded in myth and darkness now potentially becomes open to light. The urban and secular character of modernity, its fostering of pluralism and individualism, further militate against the bigot's sensibility. He detests the modern notion of progress that is so intimately connected with what Max Weber termed 'the disenchantment of the world.'

But the bigot deals with modernity as best he can, for example, by using the same scientific methods as his critics. Architects of the Nazi genocide used mathematical rationality and scientific techniques not merely to keep meticulous records of the prisoners sent to Auschwitz, or to construct the crematoria, but also to reduce corpses to their parts and to use them to create soap, cloth, and fertilizer. But Nazi science was ultimately used to legitimate irrational and unscientific claims. To engage in their genocide, the Nazis needed to assume that their victims were less than human and, in this vein, Kenan Malik was correct in noting that to suggest the infamous 'Final Solution' was a product of 'reason' is to 'elevate the prejudices of the Third Reich to the status of scientific knowledge' (Malik 1997, 127).

That being said, the bigot has never felt entirely comfortable in employing science to support his prejudices. For example, although Mussolini and Hitler may have employed scientists who used the same physics and chemistry for producing military weapons as their counterparts elsewhere, in public, the dictators insisted on the existence of 'Italian mathematics' and (in opposition to Einstein and his Jewish colleagues) 'German physics.' The bigot dislikes universal concepts and objective criteria for making scientific judgements. He prefers giving his prejudices a scientific gloss by making reference to phrenology or by insisting on the primary importance of certain physical attributes, inherited traits, eugenics, and anthropological hierarchies. Genetics has a particular attraction for the bigot seeking to explain intelligence or creativity – though no evidence exists to justify any causal connection between biology and social accomplishment.[1]

The bigot has always felt queasy about transforming the invisible into the visible, the ineffable into the discursive, and the unknown into the known. Observation and evidence, hypothesis and inference, confirmation and validation are thus selectively employed by him to justify what Cornel West has termed 'the discursive exclusion' of those who are different and what they have to offer.[2] Science requires an open society, and a liberal culture that allows the

questioning of authority. But the bigot has no use for what the young Marx called 'the ruthless critique of everything existing.'[3] He is always primarily concerned with proving what he already thinks he knows. He insists that the answers to the problems of life have been given and he resents everything that challenges inherited wisdom, parochial prejudices, and what he considers the natural order of things. Thus, he is uncertain what to make of capitalism.

Not so deep in his heart, the bigot is an opportunist. Other than his prejudices, he [or she] has no core beliefs. The bigot likes it when his [or her] interests are being served, when people of colour are exploited, but he dislikes it when he feels disadvantaged. In principle he endorses inequality and the idea of competition. But only when he is on top or, better, believes he is on top. The problem arises when he finds himself on the bottom. Competition is good when it works *for him*. When it doesn't, the bigot will insist that his competitors are cheating – and that they cheat because it is a trait of their ethnicity, nationality, race, etc. Jews conspire against him in ruling Wall Street, immigrants take away his jobs, affirmative action undermines his prospects, and unions and welfare programs have made his country soft.

Caught between fear of capitalists and contempt for workers, admiration for competition and principled dislike of socialism, the bigot vacillates. He imagines how family, neighbourhood, and religious ties, in ostracizing the subaltern, have provided the infrastructure of a productive small-town community. He cannot grasp why the bourgeoisie would strip away the 'sentimental veil' of the family and the ties that bind men to their 'natural superiors.' He is aghast at how religious ecstasy can be drowned in the 'icy waters of egotistical calculation,' a process that leaves no other nexus than 'naked self-interest' and 'cash payment.' The bigot is both amazed and repelled by the cultural and material revolutions that have broken down 'Chinese walls of tradition' so that 'all that is solid melts into air. All that is sacred becomes profane, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions' (Marx and Engels 1848, 76–77).

The logic of capitalist accumulation baffles the bigot. He cannot comprehend how wealth is ever more surely concentrated in great corporate firms and the class divisions that are generated. He is unable to see that workers are dependent on capital because employment is dependent on investment. He also never draws implications from the fact that profit (not prejudice) spurs capitalist development. Today there are banks geared toward women's interests, a black bourgeoisie, a gay consumer culture, and support among many firms for looser immigration policies. Jews, women, blacks, gays, immigrants, and members of other previously excluded groups have expanded the market and provided a pool of talent that can be fruitfully exploited. But solidarity among working people of different races, genders, and ethnicities is precisely what the bigot rejects. As a consequence, his prejudices serve as a drag on the system even while they fragment opposition to it. Thus, he finds himself critical of capital and its liberal impulses but also (perhaps even more) critical of those socialists who contest its power.

Nowhere is this counter-revolutionary undertaking analysed more trenchantly than in the historical works of Marx and Engels (Marx 1848/1969, 1: 138-142; Marx; 1848–50, 186–300; Engels 1848–50, 1:300–388; Marx 1848–50, 1:394–487). Rarely noted is that in those works, for the first time, a general theory of the counter-revolution was articulated. Old symbols and myths are repackaged to confront the two dominant forms of thought associated with the two dominant classes that emerged with the modern production process: the liberalism of the revolutionary bourgeoisie and the socialism of an incipient industrial working class. According to this logic, precapitalist values and ideologies should appeal most to precapitalist classes like the aristocracy (or aristocratic pretenders), the petty bourgeoisie (or, in German, the *Mittelstand*), the peasantry, and even the notorious semi-criminal underclass (*Lumpenproletariat*), who are rooted in a community bolstered by religious and traditional values. And that is, indeed, the case. These classes historically served as the mass base for the Ku Klux Klan, European fascism, and modern fundamentalism. Liberals and socialists – albeit usually with a guilty conscience – have also endorsed various imperialist and chauvinist forms of bigotry. Nevertheless, it is what John Dewey termed a 'warranted assumption' to suggest that a special affinity has existed between right-wing movements and the bigot: it is not true in every instance but it is true in the vast majority of instances, and it is certainly true today.

These classes vacillate between big business and the working class. Subordinate to the one, they feel superior to the other. They legitimate themselves by embracing 'property, family, religion, order' and claiming that they wish to 'save' society from 'the enemies of society.' But they usually forget to mention that just as frequently it is 'the circle of its rulers' contracts' that is saved, 'as a more exclusive interest is maintained against a wider one. Every demand of the simplest bourgeois financial reform, of the most ordinary liberalism, of the most formal republicanism, the most shallow democracy, is simultaneously castigated as an 'attempt on society' and stigmatized as 'socialism.' The right-wing agenda links the attack on liberalism and socialism. Its supporters intend to constrict pluralism, civil liberties, economic equality, and (literally) disenfranchise the subaltern. The assault on the 'socialist' welfare state is thereby coupled with the attack on 'liberal' concerns regarding gays, immigrants, people of colour, and women. Supporters of these causes may publicly (and even privately) deny that they are bigots. Nevertheless, they obviously hope to derive power and benefits from policies that foster prejudice.

Prejudice seems to flourish among those groups most marginal to the capitalist accumulation process. The bigot is most often found in non-urban settings and parochial communities among the lower middle class, low-level bureaucrats, small business owners, individual contractors, and farmers – though industrial workers, particularly white men, are among others who can also prove racist and authoritarian.[4] Were such members of such imperilled classes and groups to embrace liberalism or social democracy, or fully identify with capital

or labour, it would mean embracing ideologies and classes that view them as anachronisms, their beliefs as standing in the way of progress, and their parochial way of life as irrevocably doomed.[5]

The bigot lags behind the rapid changes generated by capitalism and so is condemned to resist new forms of social and political life (Reich 1933, 15). He looks for what is rock solid, what is seemingly beyond circumstance, and he needs his trinity: religion, convention, community. Fierce resentment of modernity's advocates and beneficiaries – cosmopolitans, intellectuals, scientists, and secularists – becomes an intrinsic part of his outlook. This resentment stems not merely from (unconscious) envy of the elite, which was the famous argument of Nietzsche[6] and Max Scheler (1994). It also emanates from the bigot's fear that the forces of modernity are destroying his social privileges, his feeling of self-worth, and his world. He is intent on not only resisting them but also reaffirming and taking back what is his, that which he feels has been unjustly taken from him. The bigot has already heard too much about the injustices that he perpetrated in the past. He is uninterested in dialogue with educated outsiders representing the subaltern who know nothing about his community and who are unwilling to take his views seriously. A right-wing poster makes the bigot's point perfectly: 'It doesn't matter what this sign says, you'll call it racism anyway!'

But then it is not simply what the bigot says but also how he says it: the obsessive-compulsive, often even pathological, style in which he organizes his experiences, articulates his words, and expresses his emotions (Shapiro 1999). His style is not a derivative matter but instead a part of his character. The bigot senses that modernity is undermining his belief system and his ability to make sense of himself. This is the source of his identity deficit and what Sartre once described as an 'objective neurosis' that projects the causes of his failings on the victim of his prejudice. The success of the subaltern in changing her status leaves the bigot with someone to blame for the demise of his world. The bigot is engaged not only in demeaning the target of his prejudice but also in turning himself into a victim. In his eyes, the real victim becomes the imaginary oppressor and the real oppressor becomes the imaginary victim. The bigot thus feels himself persecuted and his response is often tinged by hysteria. His neurotic style is a form of adaptation. Whether it is fostered by conscious instrumental desires to rationalize behaviour, or unconscious desires to deflect guilt, depends on the circumstances (Adorno 1955, 115). Either way, this style works to confirm the mixture of pessimism and resentment that predominates among those who believe they are losers in the march of progress.

The bigot justifies his entitlement by birth or by inherited privileges sanctified by tradition such as gender, skin colour, ethnicity, or lineage. His superiority has nothing to do with work: it has not been earned. The famous line from Pierre Beaumarchais's *The Marriage of Figaro* (1784), which was delivered by a simple barber to his aristocratic nemesis, still packs a punch: 'Other than being born what have you ever done to deserve your privileges?'

The bigot can only answer by referring to God's will, innate traits, or tradition.[7] He is content to claim that his privileges are deserved because they have always existed, and that the subaltern is thereby eternally condemned to his inferior status. This view pits the bigot against the most basic contention of modernity and the general political position of the subaltern, namely that social practices are mutable. This helps explain why the subaltern has tended to embrace liberal and socialist ideologies. Part of the struggle for equality fought by Jews, people of colour, sexual outsiders, intellectuals, and strangers involves a philosophical attack on fixed assumptions about human nature and on frozen social hierarchies.

As many forms of prejudice are available as there are identities. The bigot simply picks one and insists on the superiority of its (authentic, affirming, and self-serving) narrative to the exclusion of other narratives, its (authentic, affirming, and self-serving) customs to the exclusion of other customs, its (authentic, affirming, and self-serving) feeling of belonging to the exclusion of the Other. By heightening the binary opposition between 'us' and 'them,' the paranoid personality gains an elemental sense of superiority. But that division is then refracted by the bigot in different ways to different groups. The bigot thus embraces cosmopolitanism in reverse: instead of feeling at home everywhere, which Kant considered the essence of cosmopolitanism, he is intent on making perceived outsiders not at home in his community, his nation, his house of worship, or his tribe (Kant 1949, 446). The bigot's world is small. There is nothing to learn, little sense of adventure, and less of possibility.

Emerging trends might expand the possibilities for autonomy, tolerance, self-expression, and self-definition.[8] Human rights have been acknowledged in principle even by nations that have abused them in practice. The bigot, a reactionary by inclination and interest, senses the threat posed by progress – liberal education, toleration, and what I once termed the cosmopolitan sensibility.[9] Progress inveighs against lynchings, pogroms, slavery, and witch trials. It fosters the idea of a common humanity beyond inherited traits, religious differences, and national boundaries. Progress makes it possible for the individual to look outside himself and take into account the longings of the weakest, 'the lowly and the insulted.'

Mitigating suffering is an imperative that exists within every religion: Jewish law condemns the torture of animals; the Buddha spoke of 'selflessness'; Confucius saw himself as part of the human race; Hinduism lauds the journey of life; and Jesus identified with the 'lowly and the insulted' in his Sermon on the Mount. What Norbert Elias once termed the 'civilizing process' describes the development of compassion, empathy, and toleration not simply for those like us but for those who are different. All of this rubs the bigot against the grain. So far as he is concerned, modernity has brought him nothing but grief. The lyrics to a song played by the white supremacist band Definite Hate sum up his feelings nicely: 'What has happened to America/That was once so white and free?'

5.1. The Other

As modernity unfolds, the bigot's enemies multiply and he is forced to defend himself on many fronts simultaneously. Powerful conspiracies, revisionist histories, rumblings of discontent from below, and cultural threats to his community swirl around him. Every new criticism, every new demand for equality, every new scientific discovery fills his heart with dismay. Making sense of them all is a herculean task: better to treat them as different expressions of the same impulse. Nazi racial 'science' explored not merely the innate traits of Jews but also those of other groups ranging from 'Aryans' to the Slavs and the Chinese. The Ku Klux Klan and the Aryan Nation never hated just blacks and Jews; their disgust extended to Catholics and other minorities as well. Because prejudice comes in clusters and its victims are arbitrarily defined, the bigot can place primacy on a particular target as circumstances dictate. He can champion the fight against homosexuality in one situation, religious heretics in another, or Roma in still another. Each target of hatred reinforces the others as an overriding worldview emerges built on stereotypical images. Nowhere is this tendency demonstrated better than when a bigoted fictional character insists the Jew is 'as vain as a Spaniard, ignorant as a Croat, greedy as a Levantine, ungrateful as a Maltese, insolent as a Gypsy, dirty as an Englishman, unctuous as a Kalmyk, imperious as a Prussian and as anyone from Asti' (Eco 2011, 6).

For the bigot, subaltern groups congeal into a single all-encompassing and overwhelming threat. Fighting them calls for narrowing their opportunities, refusing to see them for what they are, and identifying them as inherently inferior with fixed traits and an unchangeable status. Thus, the bigot constructs the Other– even as a network of stereotypical images constructs him. That the bigot lacks knowledge about those suffering prejudice serves his purpose. Fantasies about malevolent Arab sheiks, rich Jews controlling London, and shiftless people of colour only reinforce this ignorance. Such images are fixed and finished. The bigot fears the prospect of individuals choosing their identities and is unsettled by what they are willing to accept (or deny) with respect to their religions, conventions, and communities. With each such choice, the bigot's standing erodes a little more, and the Other, in expressing his will, threatens to become a subject in his own right.

That is precisely what the bigot wishes to prevent. So, he longs for a time when the Other was treated as such: when he was expected to step off the sidewalk as the bigot passed, when the Other never sat on the same bench and didn't drink from the same fountain. Vienna in 1938 had benches with signs stating that Jews and dogs were not permitted to sit on them; Hitler closed public swimming pools to Jews. Imperialist settlers had the same mindset when it came to the colonized peoples. But there was a sense in which the Other remained anonymous: he was everyone in a given group and 'no one' in particular. The subaltern vanishes as a living, singular individual. Consequently, she always

totters on the edge of becoming one of 'them' who threatens the bigot – and 'us' (Heidegger 1962, 167–69).

Referring to them and how 'they' behave enables the bigot to avoid dealing with any evidence that reflects their real activities. He is uninterested in distinctions. Differences between Islam as a faith and Islam as a political enterprise, or between Sunnis and Shiites, fall by the way-side. Judaism and Zionism become interchangeable. Blacks, gays, Latinos, and women are fashioned into images of what the bigot imagines them to be. This construction is always (whether consciously or unconsciously) designed to serve his interest. Only by imposing anonymity upon the Other can the bigot affirm his own subjectivity. The implications of that dynamic are concrete. The vision of 'them' shapes who 'we' are: the Other invades our sentiments, our analytic perspectives, and thus our everyday lives. Umberto Eco was correct when he noted that the motto of the bigot is '*Odi ergo sum*. I hate therefore I am' (Eco 2011, 17).

The bigot requires recognition by the Other to affirm his superiority and his existential sense of self. But he is made uneasy by the mass media and the Internet. He senses his victim's discontent with his lack of freedom, his paralyzed subaltern status, and things as they are. Most of all, however, he intuits the Other's lack of respect for who he, the bigot, is and what he believes. Just as modernity steadily undermines the identification of the subaltern as Other, it also intensifies the bigot's prejudices. His hatred of modernity is thus a function of modernity itself. Fundamentalism, for example, is a modern phenomenon. The quest for purity is a response to the seeming triumph of the profane. In the fundamentalists' view, revenge should be taken against blasphemers and the heretics. But there are so many of them! Old-time religion, family values, and small-town traditions are nearly powerless against global developments predicated upon diversity. The terms of engagement have been set: the bigot is condemned to fight a guerrilla war against the encroachments of the Other and the erosion of his way of life.

This brave new world, for the bigot, generates only confusion and anger. There are now nearly two hundred countries; an explosion in the number of belief systems has taken place; and more than three quarters of the people on the planet speak more than one language. Religions are ever less geographically determined. The Grand Mosque in the holy city of Mecca is now dwarfed by a mammoth clock tower, an imitation of Big Ben, which serves as the centrepiece of a huge shopping mall with an eight-hundred-room luxury hotel. Religious devotion now increasingly occurs in a secular context in which past affiliations are on the decline. There are worship sites on television and on the Internet. Evangelical Christians now pray in 'mega-churches' with their own malls and sports complexes or in smaller 'gatherings' and spiritual 'communities' within their cafes and art galleries; mullahs use cell phones; creationists justify themselves with 'research'; and the faithful organize through the web. Religious decisions are increasingly affected by the modern problems of everyday life attendant upon abortion, sex education, homosexuality, and the misconduct

of priests. Identity is becoming ever more fluid and susceptible to the world of commodities.

With the emergence of this disenchanted multicultural world, bereft of absolutes and chaotic in the multiplication of possibilities for self-definition, the bigot experiences an identity deficit. The lack of respect he receives only heightens his nostalgia for privileges enjoyed in times past and the traditions that justified them. Little thought is wasted on the Other who suffered the costs. The bigot chose not to look then, and he chooses not to look now. Like Bertolt Brecht's character J. Pierpont Morgan in *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* (1932), who owns a slaughterhouse but cannot look at blood, the bigot turns away from the world that his prejudices helped shape. Most Israelis have not visited the Occupied Territories, few memorials recall the numerous slave revolts in the Americas, Hindus in India consider the Muslims in their midst a 'pampered minority,' and apologies to the victims of Western imperialism have not exactly been forthcoming.

The bigot is content to cloak the past in sentimentality: the happy slaves in the fields, the happy women in the kitchen, the happy white people with their picket fences, the happy Jews in the ghetto, the happy colonized happily learning the rudiments of civilization from the colonizer. For some reason, however, the subaltern always seems ungrateful. That is intolerable to the bigot. Doubts are thereby created that he cannot bear. They heighten his insecurity, his unconscious guilt, and thus the brutality he employs to expunge those feelings.[10] So far as the bigot is concerned, he is acting in the subaltern's interests – and, even if he isn't, the unjust treatment is only natural and morally necessary.

Living in a world of prefabricated images and stereotypes, the bigot simply cannot understand why the Other should resent him. The only explanation is that the worthless wretch is being fed lies by some alien force: carpet-baggers, intellectuals, communists, or terrorists. The bigot suffers what from what Henri Parens has called 'stranger anxiety' (Parens 2007, 3). The degree to which the bigot is affected by this neurosis is the degree to which his paranoia intensifies. The Other becomes increasingly diffuse and ill-defined, yet increasingly omnipresent. The bigot tends to project his own fear of the Other into rationalizations for why she cannot or will not assimilate. There is always some imputed quality that makes it impossible for her to do so. Jews are too pushy and won't embrace the Saviour; gays are depraved and won't engage in 'therapy' to 'cure' their sexual inclinations; women lack rationality; blacks are lazy and dangerously hypersexualized. All of them consider the bigot their enemy and, so far as he is concerned, their common hatred can only derive from the common resentment of his superiority.

Whatever the controversy, therefore, it is always the aggrieved, never the bigot, who should show restraint. The onus of social responsibility is always on those responding to his provocation. This leads the bigot to adapt his prejudices to meet new conditions. Anti-immigrant sentiments and stereotypes have gracefully shifted from one group to another over time. The supposed laziness

of blacks, once considered biological, is now thought to be due to their reliance on the welfare state. Women are no longer unfit for various jobs because of their supposed physical handicaps, but because of their perceived emotional makeup and the pressure of surrendering their traditional roles as homemakers. Under cover of a belief in the Second Coming of Christ, Christian true believers who were once rabidly anti-Semitic have now apparently decided that the next Antichrist will not be a Jew but rather an Arab and that support for Israel is less noxious than the thought of Islam controlling Jerusalem. Nevertheless, the original intent of the bigot remains what it was: the leopard doesn't change its spots.

Whether the bigot has disfigured 'the face of the other,' in Emmanuel Levinas's phrase, is immaterial. He always feels himself the insulted party: it is his critics who are intolerant and insensitive. The bigot must therefore find ways to justify his aggrieved status – and protect his privileges. So it is that 'they' are ruining the neighbourhood; 'they' are taking advantage of liberal programs and wasting the bigot's tax dollars; 'they' are always the culprit. And, since they are the culprit, it makes no sense to let them utilize their civic rights to question the bigot's rectitude and further destroy the community. As he sees it, freedom should belong only to him. The bigot can pray where he wishes and say what he wants. But the freedom that applies to him does not apply to the Other. This double standard is a necessary consequence of bigotry – and it always has political ramifications. It has become a common refrain, in complaining about the spread of Islam in the West, to suggest that building a mosque is different from building a synagogue because the former constitutes a political statement or provocation. Similar sentiments informed the bitter controversy over whether a mosque might be constructed in New York City at 'Ground Zero.'

The language of intolerance seems eminently reasonable to the bigot. Manichean assumptions define his world: he is unconcerned with nuance. That is why, today, gays make such a convenient target. Their practices are deemed unnatural or self-consciously perverse. Being gay is either an unalterable biological determination that makes the gay person appear abnormal, or it is a choice that thereby renders him purposefully degenerate. Either way, the gay person challenges what it means to be a 'real' man or a 'real' woman. Gender roles must remain what they were because what they were is 'natural' – and what they are now is not. The bigot takes his arguments where he can find them. He is a bricoleur who uses whatever he happens to find along the way. Any text can be made to say anything and the more sacred the better: Old Testament, New Testament, or Koran can all be used to argue that heretics and nonbelievers deserve the sword, women are inferior, homosexuality is a sin, and segregation is natural. If the bigot's critics use the same texts against him, which has happened more than once, then – obviously – they have misread them.

The language of intolerance is unconcerned with argumentation or substantiation. Yet the bigot does not exactly lie: something other than simple falsehood is at work. Lies are subject to falsification, but the bigot's existential self-definition is not. This is the underpinning for the language that he employs

to make sense of reality. It short-circuits contradiction. The notion of 'deracination,' for example, has a self-evident moral connotation for the bigot. But it assumes a notion of race that is elastic in that it can apply to a species, a group with common physical attributes, a nation or ethnicity, or individuals supposedly defined by genetic or genealogical traits.

Today, perhaps, racial categories are more hinted at than employed in public discourse. But they still provide the more intellectually inclined bigot with a point of reference for justifying his superiority and his target's inferiority as well as explaining the decline of society. Intolerance can affect even established philosophical categories like 'rootedness,' 'identity,' or 'authenticity,' when these terms are employed to deny reciprocity and to privilege one particular group over others. Everything is 'rooted' in the bigot's 'authentic' experience of 'identity' so that the categories are hijacked to further the same purpose: invalidate any meaningful standard of responsibility for judging either the bigot or his victim.

During the eighteenth century, calls for tolerance inspired the struggle for a republican state under the liberal rule of law. Free speech was considered the precondition for all other civil liberties: it would have defeated the purpose to insulate this or that religion or this or that religious figure from criticism or even 'blasphemy.' The extent to which freedom of speech is inhibited was seen as the extent to which pluralism is constrained and the recognition of those who think differently was viewed as an implicit attack on the bigot. In the media age when anyone can say anything and the need for pluralism becomes the justification, however, some maintain that the original understanding of tolerance requires revision. According to them we must now confront the phenomenon of 'repressive tolerance' whose proponents believe that the content of speech is always secondary to the right to speak (Marcuse 1960). Their logic permits intolerance, places stupidity on the same level as intelligence, and attempts to bind future generations to the ignorant prejudices of those that preceded them. Repressive tolerance is willing to accept hate speech, flat-out racism, the denial of global warming, or the rejection of evolution as mere matters of opinion.

Every teacher knows that there is no place for hate speech or name-calling in a classroom: it is impolite, intimidating, and disastrous for a meaningful discourse. Challenging intolerance is a difficult cultural and political process in which it is impossible to extrapolate from one society to another. But the common aim is surely securing the possibility of dialogue. A democratic society is based on respect for civil liberties and a willingness to hear what many believe should not be spoken. Dealing with this situation requires common sense mixed with a commitment to tolerance. Those wishing to censor the bigot should remain wary of turning him into a martyr. The defence of free speech should not preclude moral protests against attempts to manipulate tolerance for repressive ends. But moral protests are not the same thing as legislation. To move from one to the other is to play into the bigot's hands. He always tends to favour authority over liberty. Because his aim is to deprive the subaltern of

agency, legal censorship is a dangerous way for libertarians to respond and it is even more dangerous to treat its employment as a cause for celebration. There is nothing that the bigot fears more than open dialogue, cosmopolitan sentiments, and pluralism. He knows that these are the cultural trends he must resist if the Other is to remain the Other.

5.2. Identity Deficits

Jean-Paul Sartre once said of the anti-Semite that he 'turns himself into stone.' The bigot flees from his own freedom. Prejudice locks him as well as its target into pre-established categories: neither can alter his fate. The bigot is unwilling to entertain new possibilities, unwilling to think in anything other than stereotypes, and unwilling to change.

He embraces 'bad faith' and thus he is inauthentic by definition. In this same vein, according to Sartre, the authentic Jew exhibits good faith only if he recognizes the socially constructed 'situation' in which the bigot sees him. Individual freedom is meaningful only in its exercise: the subject has an identity. Only the Jew can confront the anti-Semite with the empirical reality that prejudice ignores. The Jew can have humanist, liberal, and socialist supporters. No one else, however, can challenge the anti-Semite in quite the same way.

Sartre's *Anti-Semite and Jew* caused a sensation when it first appeared in 1947. But its implications have often been misunderstood and its salience narrowed. Sartre's approach is relevant for understanding not just the anti-Semite but the bigot in general. His view of identity, with its emphasis on the conscious exercise of freedom, describes a basic influence on struggles undertaken by other targets of prejudice. The bigot no less than his victim experiences the existential impulse toward self-definition: ethics becomes a function of whether the individual is willing to take responsibility for this impulse and how it is translated into action in the given 'situation.'

With its emphasis on individual freedom and personal responsibility, for fairly obvious reasons, existentialism became the dominant philosophy in the aftermath of World War II. It was the age of Camus, Sartre, and – perhaps above all – Kafka. Communism and fascism along with their revolutionary agents were in the dustbin of history, or unwittingly headed there. Moral progress on a grand scale seemed a pious myth given the experience of Auschwitz and the later revelations about the Gulag. The aftermath of World War II produced a new preoccupation with the plight of the Other, with ethical responsibility, and with the rights of the individual. In deliberate contrast to the protestations of those Nazis at the Nuremburg Trials who insisted that they were just following orders, the new existential philosophy called on the individual to assume responsibility for his or her 'situation.' Such existential themes entered the popular consciousness not through philosophical works like Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (1943) but through a host of novels, plays, and films. They

congealed to form an ethos that is impossible to document fully or pinpoint empirically. This ethos existed, so to speak, beneath the radar. Even so, it would prove decisive for the new battles between the bigot and the Other.

Nonconformism took on a new validity and, among the cultural left, individuals were encouraged to assert their 'authentic' subjectivity – and hence their identity – in reacting not only against anti-Semitism but also against sexism, homophobia, racism, and the Eurocentric delusions of Western colonialism. Inspired by *Anti-Semite and Jew,* Simone de Beauvoir's classic *The Second Sex* (1952) called on women to fight their second-class status. It was greeted by a campaign of vilification impossible to imagine today. A similar concern with resistance by the subaltern appears in Jean Genet's work about transgendered life, *Our Lady of the Flowers* (1943), and his *Thief's Journal* of 1949 (which was dedicated to Sartre and Beauvoir). Sartre's *Saint Genet* (1952), a daring intellectual biography, highlighted the road to authenticity undertaken by his friend, Genet, a onetime thief and homosexual prostitute. Many of these writers also showed marked empathy for the struggles against colonialism and for those representing new social movements. Sartre's famous introduction to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) and Genet's last work, his moving evocation of the Palestinian refugee camps and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, *The Prisoner of Love* (1986), are testaments to solidarity among the subaltern.

Turning the disenfranchised and despised Other into a self-conscious subject and member of the broader community became the fundamental aim of political 'engagement.' Humanism as well as liberal and socialist ideologies with Enlightenment roots increasingly were considered inadequate for this undertaking. Their universal categories and philosophical assumptions were seen as ignoring the unique experience or 'situation' of the woman, the homosexual, the person of colour, or the native. A new preoccupation with 'difference' ironically came to emphasize notions of solidarity based on the organic attributes associated with ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, nation, religion, or race. The idea of the universal intellectual associated with a tradition ranging from Voltaire to Sartre now made way for what Michel Foucault termed the 'empirical intellectual' (Bronner 2002, 73). That the subaltern should now speak in his own name about his empirical experiences was a laudable and democratic goal. But the primacy accorded the empirical experience of this or that group not only often fostered intellectual parochialism but also, on a more practical and mundane level, enabled the subaltern, in a self-serving and self-righteous fashion, to disregard criticisms or suggestions from outsiders.

Narrow forms of identity politics remain popular. What today appears as a left-wing position, however, was actually forged in the crucible of reaction. Joseph de Maistre put the matter strikingly when he wrote that 'there is no such thing as man in the world. In the course of my life I have seen Frenchmen, Italians, Russians, etc…. But, as for man, I declare that I have never met him in my life; if he exists, he is unknown to me' (Berlin 1992, 100). Many progressive authors have cited his famous statement approvingly. But it actually opens with

the words: 'The Constitution of 1795, just like its predecessors, was made for man.' An arch-reactionary, Maistre employed his empirical understanding of cultural identity (and cultural repression) against liberal democracy, pluralism, socialism, and ethical rationalism. He was a prophet looking backward. What bound people together, according to him, were the mythical, romantic, and existential 'roots' that they share and that the Other does not. From the royalist-clerical counter-Enlightenment of the eighteenth century to the present, every reactionary movement would be driven by his kind of pseudo-concreteness and contempt for universal ideals. It is not the maintenance of 'difference,' ghettoes, or notions of 'separate but equal' that are an affront to the bigot, but rather the spectre of reciprocity. Hatred of this idea drives him to invest in notions like integral nationalism or the organic community – in which he has standing, things are as they should be, and all is right with the world.

The Cult of the Self was the title of Maurice Barrès' trilogy, which included *Under the Eyes of the Barbarians* (1888), *A Free Man* (1889), and *The Garden of Berenice* (1891). Virtually unread, and unreadable today, his books are interesting only as a reactionary response to the Bildungsroman, which was introduced by Goethe and other important figures of the Enlightenment. For many, however, Barrès's guiding impulses are still salient. He understood identity as anchored in intuitive feelings inherited from a specific social experience of the past. Only members of the community with whom the bigot identifies are believed to have the insight, intuition, or experience needed to make judgments about their culture or their politics. Emphasizing the 'rootedness' of the individual in the history and life of a unique community, Barrès, Paul Bourget, Édouard Drumont, Charles Maurras, and others attacked the 'deracinated' liberal and cosmopolitan 'intellectuals' like Lucien Herr, Jean Jaurès, and Émile Zola, who defended the unfortunate Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish army captain unjustly convicted of treason. The belief that reason is subordinate to intuition and prejudice in guiding human affairs, affirming national identity, and making political judgements is fundamental for the bigot and a cornerstone of the anti-Enlightenment tradition (Sternhell 2009, 216). Those who deny their roots in favour of universal standards of justice are traitors by definition. Equal treatment for a Jew as a citizen of France will result only in further deracination and the erosion of its Christian heritage.

After World War II, when the aged Maurras was condemned by a postwar court for his collaboration with the Nazis, he responded: 'This is the revenge of Dreyfus.' The great conflict of the 1890s had solidified the intellectual connections between republicans and socialists even as it had generated the original proto-fascist movement Action Française, whose ideology fused religious dogmatism, integral nationalism, and anti-Semitism. Notions like the liberal rule of law and human rights, cosmopolitanism, and deliberative discourse were treated by these bigots as conceptual threats to the lived life of the individual. Identity was, by contrast, seen as resting on a supposedly organic connection to a community whose unique discourses and experiences are intimately and

existentially familiar to the individual. An apodictic form of knowledge is embraced that prizes intuition and resists what today is often termed deliberative discourse and the evidentiary claims of the other. Barrès stated this bluntly in his *Scenes and Doctrines of Nationalism* (1902): 'Truth is not something to be known intellectually. Truth is finding a particular point, the only point, that one and no other, from which everything appears to us in proper perspective. […] It is the past centuries which form my vision; that point from which everything is seen through the eyes of a Frenchman … That is French truth and French justice. And pure nationalism is simply the discovery of that point, searching for it, and when it is found, holding fast to it and receiving from it our art, our politics, and the manner of living our life.'

The bigot has always believed that there is *something,* some indefinable quality deriving from blood or nationality, that creates a special capacity for experience and belonging. The two are related since the supposed ability of an individual to experience the world in a particular way creates an affinity with others like him. This experiential capacity trumps what emerges in discourse or any ethic with universal postulates. Such experience or intuition, whatever is self-referential, becomes the bigot's privileged criterion of judgment. This self-referential position insulates his decisions from questioning or contradiction. It also creates the basis for believing in some hidden form of group solidarity whose recognition alone serves as the basis for authenticity (cf. El-Haj 2012). In a famous 1925 essay, Franz Rosenzweig called this reliance on revelatory intuition or experience, itself generated from within a particular group, 'the new thinking.' This great Jewish theologian of the early twentieth century, who wrote *The Star of Redemption* (1921), believed that ultimately such revelatory experience illuminates 'my' essence and what it means to be human. But the 'new thinking' is easily open to manipulation: it allows for a kind of mythical individual identification with the achievements of remarkable ancestors within his group (that is, with Einstein or Du Bois) that is at once self-inflating and self-deluding. This feeling of pride in ancestry is actually inauthentic by definition: it has nothing to do with the real activity of the individual in question and is thus unearned.

But that is perhaps the point. The bigot believes that his identity, his upbringing in a particular community, gives him special insights and so the ability to judge others. There is no possibility of transgressing what Helmuth Plessner termed 'the boundaries of community.' Those who do not listen to the inner voice of identity – or, better, *his* inner voice – are traitors by definition. Reaffirming the bigot's identity calls on him to view reality from the standpoint of his faith, his ethnicity, or his nation. His intent is to restore the past or what Benedict Anderson (2006) termed an 'imagined community.' Its allure can be as real for the weak and the exploited as for the exploiters. Insular preoccupations with discrete forms of bigotry can lead one victim of prejudice to denigrate the suffering of others. A certain victim internalizes the bigotry directed against him and turns it against the other: Israel has, for example, enforced

restrictive housing codes against Palestinians in the Occupied Territories that are remarkably similar to those once used by anti-Semites against Jews in the ghettoes.

Competition also emerges among groups over who has suffered the most: Camus likened this phenomenon to the 'algebra of blood.' People of colour can be racists, women can be sexists, and Jews can act like anti-Semites. *West Side Story* (1961) makes this point rather well. Ethnocentric, national, racial, religious, or gender prejudices are not confined to rich, white, male Christians. Conflicts between Latinos and African Americans occur frequently and not only among gang members. Enough primarily religious organizations representing both groups have hindered the struggle for gay rights. The target of bigotry can be a bigot in his own right. That prejudice is an attempt to assert social power does not absolve the powerless of responsibility. To deny this is to deny the powerless their residual and always imperilled moment of freedom Exclusionary ideology can take any number of forms. But it always taints anti-authoritarian struggles and distorts a progressive politics of resistance. What advocates of these exclusionary ideologies have in common is their willingness to dismiss liberal and cosmopolitan ideals in favour of narrow interpretations of group experience.

American identity politics took off after 1968 following the collapse of the civil rights movement and the Poor Peoples' Campaign. Voices from many subaltern groups that suffered prejudice and discrimination started rendering identity ever more 'concrete' through an ever- greater specification of subjectivity. Within the women's movement, for example, black women, gay women, and black gay women demanded recognition of a new identity. Those voices undoubtedly deserved to be heard, but there was a price. Each repressed 'voice' generated a new interest group or lobbying organization that was concerned less with broader forms of solidarity than with the needs of its own clientele. Whether pursued by the dominant or the subaltern, the strategy of dogmatic identity politicians and their interest groups is to foster the belief that those sharing the same natural or experiential attributes somehow together from the perspective of the 'community' and constitute a target of aggression by the outside world. An unwillingness to countenance an exercise of identity (other than the bigot's own) is the core of the problem. The bigot defines the norm, and he necessarily defines it in a way that protects his interests.

Identity politics has been an important force in attacking 'white-skinned privilege.' It has fostered respect for previously marginalized groups. But the preoccupation with identity has also divided the exploited. Solidarity becomes insular, interest in other targeted groups becomes minimal, and cosmopolitan sympathies become secondary. In the United States the problem goes back at least to Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass, when mutual distrust between civil rights advocates and feminists hampered both causes. In the 1970s and 1980s, too, as public resources diminished and a backlash began against

the new social movements, ideologies expressing frustrated forms of subjectivity legitimated (often ferociously) the pitting of one subaltern group against another. *Do the Right Thing* (1989) by Spike Lee beautifully depicted the translation of all this tension into the bigotry of 'the street.' In his movie, set in a poor Brooklyn neighbourhood, none of the characters of different ethnicities (African American, Latino, Korean, and Italian) actually listen to one another in their everyday interactions. Even after the groups momentarily unify against an egregious expression of police brutality, each is still ultimately thrown back into the same perspective forged by his own group, and life simply goes on.

No one needs existential self-validation more than the bigot's victim, and this subaltern can also puff himself up. He too can despise the unnatural outsider, the lazy immigrant, the conniving Jew, or the cosmopolitan intellectual. He can support cultural imperialism, terror, ethnic cleansing, and genocide or all of them together. The subaltern can cling to his own self-serving narrative, and he too will often change his tactics as circumstances dictate. American politics is littered with instances where blacks have been pitted against Latinos and against white workers, and white workers against women and gays (to take just a few examples). In their attempt to avoid universal claims and categories, as well as 'master narratives,' those promoting these damaging political storylines highlight not only the truly unique character of different prejudices, but also the empirical and supposedly concrete experiences of identity used to combat them.

What is true of prejudice between subaltern identity groups is also true within such groups. Hierarchies have existed for centuries among Jews of different national origins, and American blacks have discriminated against one another according to the darkness of their skin. Racial conflict among Asians also has a long history. Patriarchal, homophobic, and anti-Semitic prejudices have been expressed, often notoriously, by movements that have advanced ideologies ranging from Black Power and Latino identity to the liberation of Palestine. This fragmenting of the subaltern is among the most important reasons that progressive forces have splintered. Each has an institutional incentive to privilege the concerns of its clients and battle other subaltern groups as resources grow scarcer and competitors multiply. Because identity is employed to justify the diverse ambitions of diverse organizations claiming to represent diverse subaltern constituencies, each can easily be played off against the others. Coalitions with other exploited groups remain possible. Nevertheless, the narrow pursuit of identity creates incentives to engage in what I have often called the moral economy of the separate deal.

The bigot is not incapable of solidarity. It's been said that 400,000 KKK uniforms were secretly sewn by Southern women – and not one ever betrayed the cause. But the bigot's solidarity is always with those 'of his kind.' His notion of solidarity is stunted, closed in on itself, and beyond reproach. In this modern age, he is as intolerant and staunchly parochial as he ever was. But he has

become sly – and he tries to cover his tracks. It is the task of his critics to un-cover them – and, perhaps, what he is (consciously or unconsciously) hiding. Each identity generates its own prejudices; personal experiences can always be invoked to the person's benefit in any argument, or when the need for any par-ticular self-definition arises.

The issue is less the analytic dissection of how identities intersect than the criteria for choosing between loyalties or dealing with circumstances in which identities conflict. And, in fact, the most universally admired movements of the subaltern have highlighted the principle of reciprocity. These were the move-ments led by figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Nelson Mandela. In fashioning support, they often dealt with conflicting traditions within their ranks. As they exploded the bigot's stereotypical understanding of the subaltern, they also evinced solidarity with the more general strivings of the oppressed.

Only by embracing a critical perspective on identity can it become something more than an experiential given and a natural fixed attribute. Identity will then involve an ethical choice among what are often mutually exclusive (reactionary and progressive) traditions within what is supposedly the common history of a community, ethnicity, gender, nation, or religion. There is a sense in which 'a culture that encourages its members to be aware of their own traditions, while at the same time being able to take a distance from them is superior (and thus more 'civilized') to one which only flatters the pride of its members' (Todorov 2010, 34). Nuance of this sort is feared by the bigot. That is because it may im-bue the Other with a subjectivity that supposedly only he can enjoy.

'Craving recognition of one's special, interchangeable uniqueness is part of the human condition,' writes Melissa Harris-Perry, 'and it is soothed only by the opportunity to contribute freely to the public realm' (Harris-Perry 2011, 38). Spontaneous action from below, the practical exercise of democracy, is the way in which the subaltern gains recognition and forces the bigot to take him seriously. Frances Fox Piven (2006, 146) has noted that 'the mobilization of collective defiance and the disruption it causes have always been essential to the preservation of democracy.' The struggle for liberty has always been the struggle for recognition by 'ordinary people' who do not occupy the highest rung on the ladder: the person without property, the person of another colour, the person of another sexual orientation, the heretic, or the immigrant. All of them have suffered discrimination that was buttressed by prejudice. It is worth remembering that the recognition they gained was in spite of the bigot, not because of his charity, wisdom, or cultural flexibility.

Notes

1. 'After more than a century of claims that high intellectual or artistic ac-complishment is somehow rooted in heredity and, more specifically, in the

possession of 'genes for high intelligence' or 'genes for creativity,' there is no credible evidence for their existence.' (Lewontin 2012, 18).

2. Discursive exclusion and relegating the Other 'to silence does not simply correspond to (or is not simply reflective of) the relative powerlessness of black people at the time. It also reveals the evolving internal dynamics of the structure of modern discourse in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Western Europe – or during the Enlightenment.' (West 1999, 70).

3. See Marx to Arnold Ruge. 1843. Available at the Marxists Internet Archive, http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/letters/43_09-alt.htm.

4. See Erich Fromm's analysis conducted during the late 1920s and early 1930s (when, it should be noted, social democracy was on the defensive and communism was entering its totalitarian phase). (Fromm 1939/1984).

5. This is not only true in the West. (Nanda 2003).

6. Inspired by 'slave morality,' resentment directs itself against what is different, creative, and unique, leading to a conformist definition of what is good, true, and beautiful. It thereby projects the failings of the inferior on an artificially constructed enemy. While Nietzsche viewed resentment as fundamental to all religious, democratic, and egalitarian movements, today it is expressed most by their opponents. (Nietzsche 1887/2003, sections 10–11)

7. The wife of Tim LaHaye – the bombastic evangelical minister warning of apocalypse – makes her own hysterical pitch for stability and traditional marriage by noting that the husband's authority is 'not earned, not achieved, not dependent on superior intelligence, virtue or physical prowess, but assigned by God.' (LaHaye 1993, 134).

8. See, in particular, the 'World Values Survey' (1997) directed by Ronald Ingelhardt and the 'Human Development Trends' analysed by Hans Rostling. Available at www.worldvaluessurvey.org; www.gapminder.org/downloads/human-development-trends-2005 (accessed October 25, 2013).

9. 'The cosmopolitan sensibility presumes a certain capacity for empathy on the part of all individuals beyond the constraints imposed by their race, gender, or 'situation.' It assumes the existence of cultural differences and, from a critical standpoint, it celebrates the friction between the particular and the universal.' (Bronner 2002, 333)

10. Legitimizing the status of the bigot requires devaluing the subaltern. 'These two attempts at legitimacy are actually inseparable. Moreover, the more the usurped is downtrodden, the more the usurper triumphs and, thereafter, confirms his guilt and establishes his self-condemnation. Thus the momentum of this mechanism for defence propels itself and worsens as it continues to move. This self-defeating process pushes the usurper to go one step further; to wish the disappearance of the usurped, whose very existence causes him to take the role of usurper, and whose heavier and heavier oppression makes him more and more of an oppressor himself.' (Memmi 1991, 51).

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Opposing Authoritarian Populism: The Challenge and Necessity of a New World System

Charles Reitz

[A]uthentic freedom, i.e. freedom from the reactionary prejudices of the imperialist era (not merely in the sphere of art), cannot possibly be attained through mere spontaneity or by persons unable to break through the confines of their own immediate experience. For as capitalism develops, the continuous production and reproduction of these reactionary prejudices is intensified and accelerated, not to say consciously promoted by the imperialist bourgeoisie. So, if we are ever going to be able to understand the way in which reactionary ideas infiltrate our minds, and achieve a critical distance from such prejudices, this can only be accomplished by hard work, by abandoning and transcending the limits of immediacy, by scrutinizing all subjective experiences and measuring them against social reality. *In short it can only be achieved by a deeper probing of the real world.*

—Georg Lukács (1938/1980, 37, emphasis added)

6.1. Radical Social Change Requires '*A Deeper Probing of the Real World*'

Georg Lukács understood in the 1938 run-up to Germany's fascist political ferocity that freedom from the reactionary prejudices of authoritarian populism required *theoretical* understanding that penetrates beneath empirical facts and phenomena, discerning the underlying dialectical systems generating the observable economic, social, cultural and ecological/data. So, when we read a contemporary journalist report the following: 'Today's American fascists are far less educated than the fascists of the Third Reich, and they're proud of their ignorance – they're defiantly stupid and mediocre and resentful of hard working educated people of colour, immigrants, and women. And that defiant ignorance has gotten into the American bloodstream,'[1] let's understand how the bitterness got there. Racial animosity and anti-immigrant scapegoating are being orchestrated today in service to the troubled system of American capitalism as weapons of economic stabilization and social control. An earlier wave of counter-revolutionary super-patriotism and resurgent white supremacy had served this function right after World War I. The 1919 Palmer Raids and larger 'Red Scare' (the federal-state-local campaigns of police-state intimidation and deportation against suspected socialist activists and immigrant radical democrats) taught us that a culture-wide build-up of ugly political and racial prejudice can repressively reinforce the 'sanctity of the prevailing order of society.'[2] Law-enforcement-led authoritarian populist mobs like the KKK simultaneously demonstrated that nothing was 'sacred' when it came to the deportations and criminal frame-ups of immigrants and radicals, not to mention the 1919 mass lynching of 237 black men in Arkansas: unionizing sharecroppers and the returning black veterans supporting them.[3] This kind of 100% Americanism, thus deployed, characterized also subsequent waves of government-supported political repression and mobilizations of bias against centre-Left activism during the 1930s Depression, the 1950s McCarthy period, the 1960s civil rights era, and the anti-Vietnam War movement. Social critic Henry A. Giroux (2018) rightly points out that: 'Mainstream politics is now dominated by hard-right extremists who have brought to the centre of politics a shameful white-supremacist ideology, poisonous xenophobic ideas, and the blunt, malicious tactics of Islamophobia. On the other side of the political spectrum, the Democratic Party operates in the service of the war machine, financial elite, and various registers of the military-industrial-academic-surveillance complex' (Giroux 2018, 3). We must also understand the political economic foundations of the phenomena he reports.

Dynamic structural interconnections and real material inter-dependencies exist in society and in nature. Only this 'deeper probing of the real world' makes theory *critical*. Postmodernism sought to evade structural-systems analysis by asserting that truth has no foundation, and mere language games are the stuff of philosophy. Nietzsche and Wittgenstein taught the postmodernists (Lyotard,

Baudrillard, Foucault, and Hardt and Negri are intended here) how to challenge objectivist theories of knowledge by deconstructing 'metaphysics' into language, and how to debunk reflexivity and grand narration in speech in favour of a relativist epistemology and a banal functionalist analysis. Postmodernism's linguistic turn is actually an anti-foundationalist evasion of philosophy and critical political economy. Against it, Peter McLaren has urged us to 'take the struggle over the social division of labour as seriously as we do the struggle over meaning and representation' (McLaren 1997, 13). Similarly, radical educationist Michael Apple contends: 'There are gritty realities out there, realities whose power is often grounded in structural relations that are not simply social constructions created by the meanings given by an observer' (Apple 2001, 56).

This means we need to investigate the underlying structural determinants of the dominator systems that characterize global cultures, and envision from the conditions of the present intelligent choices about real possibilities for our future. What follows is a compressed account of my research exertions over the last few years to do just that. My work here traces the structural and systemic origins of intensifying racism and sexism as economic and political weapons. As a countermeasure, it offers a new political and philosophical vision by synthesizing key features of the work of Georg Lukács, Herbert Marcuse and Aldo Leopold for insights into what is going on today and in terms of the promise of what I call Green Commonwealth to build a new world system.

'[T]he system transformation that now appears to be developing […] may be replacing parliamentary democracies by right-wing nationalist repressive regimes in many countries.'[4] Paying particular attention to the structural and systemic origins of today's deployment of authoritarian populism and the intensifying use of racism and sexism as economic and political weapons, I wish to reclaim Herbert Marcuse's critique of pure tolerance and offer a new political and philosophical vision drawing on Marcuse's radical socialist intellectual legacy.[5]

The task at hand is to understand the global architecture of wealth extraction that undergirds today's intensifying inequalities of class, race and gender. My objective is to theorize the origins and outcomes of contemporary patterns of economic and cultural oppression in the U.S., including the polarizing tendencies of contemporary authoritarian populism and its design of discord[6] here and abroad. I desire to focus our political engagement in ways that can actually eliminate the injury and suffering involved. Political progress requires that we are able to identify *what we are against*, and explain *why*. Just as importantly, we need a strategy to negate the negations and *go on the offensive* for the changes that can support and extend race and gender equality, labour freedom, economic abundance, peace, and communal well-being.

Global finance capital is in crisis. So too are the economic worlds of 'the 99 percent' in the United States, Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Now more than ever we must examine the conditions that perpetuate the increasingly

stressed and volatile realities of our political, economic, and cultural lives. Corporate globalization has intensified social inequality and cultural polarization worldwide. Increasing globalization correlates directly with growing inequality both within and between nations (Sernau, 2006).

Herbert Marcuse, forty years ago, warned of the global economic and cultural developments that are now much more obvious given capitalism's crescendo of economic failures since 2008. Political and philosophical tendencies that are often referred to as 'neoliberalism' and/or 'neo-conservatism' in much analytical work today, Marcuse clearly understood back then *as organized counter-revolution* (Marcuse 1972).

Marcuse (1972) saw preventive counter-revolution as an assault undertaken by an increasingly predatory capitalism against liberal democratic change, not to mention the radical opposition (1975/1987a, 172).

> The Western world has reached a new stage of development: now, the defense of the capitalist system requires the organization of counter-revolution at home and abroad […] Torture has become a normal instrument of 'interrogation' around the world […] even Liberals are not safe if they appear as too liberal […] (Marcuse 1972, 1)

Today this entails: the police-state USA-PATRIOT Act, global terror wars, a 'money-is-speech' Supreme Court, and intensifying political economic inequalities. Marcuse understood the state is an expression of material inequalities, never neutral, having been captured by the forces of class, race, and gender exploitation. Within the current forms of unfreedom that are yet called democracies, real crimes by the right are tolerated by the state in practice – such as systematic police brutality, depriving millions of Americans from comprehensive health care, treating asylum seekers as criminals, implementing the death penalty in a racially biased manner, supplying arms and training to governments and armed groups around the world that commit torture, political killings and other human rights abuses, etc. (Amnesty International, 1998).

Today the New Right or Alt-Right is asserting a putative political need for a *democratic* society to maintain an absolute tolerance of abusive and even assaultive speech – as protected forms of 'dissent.' If we all have a *de jure* right to express any opinion in public, the *de facto* condition is that left opinions are usually marginalized and often suppressed, while right-wing ones, which benefit the ruling class, are given free play. 'This pure tolerance of sense and nonsense. …' practised under the conditions prevailing in the United States today '… cannot fulfil the civilizing function attributed to it by the liberal protagonists of democracy, namely protection of dissent' (Marcuse 1965a, 94, 117). 'To treat the great crusades against humanity […] with the same impartiality as the desperate struggles for humanity means neutralizing their opposite historical function, reconciling the executioners with their victims, distorting the record' (Marcuse 1965a, 113).

Writing of the Nazi organizers of institutionalized violence, Marcuse said: '
… if democratic tolerance had been withdrawn when the future leaders started
their campaign, mankind would have had a chance of avoiding Auschwitz and
a World War […] Such extreme suspension of the right of free speech and free
assembly is indeed justified only if the whole of society is in extreme danger
[…] Withdrawal of tolerance from regressive movements *before* they can be-
come active; intolerance even toward thought, opinion, and word, and finally
intolerance in the opposite direction, that is toward the self-styled conserva-
tives, to the political Right – these anti-democratic notions respond to the ac-
tual development of the democratic society which has destroyed the basis for
universal tolerance. The conditions under which tolerance can again become a
liberating force have still to be created' (Marcuse 1965a, 110–111).

   Champions of an abstract First Amendment freedom, like Kors & Silverglate
(1998) and Horowitz (2006a; 2006b; 2000), acquiesce when confronted with
evidence of the discriminatory effects of abusive speech. They do not seem to
think that an absolute right to abusive speech is profoundly problematic in a
culture like ours where there is no shortage of verbal vilification and acts of race
and gender persecution. In sharp contrast Marcuse argued that the doctrine of
pure tolerance was systematically utilized by reactionary and liberal forces to
abuse equality guarantees and derail or destroy the possibility of democratic
egalitarianism (Marcuse 1965a).

6.1.1. No 'Pure Tolerance' of Hate Speech

The New Right is now using '[t]he charge of imperiling free speech … to
silence oppressed and marginalized groups and to push back against their
interests' (Stanley 2016). In 1965 Marcuse called out what is now more widely
recognized as 'the free speech fallacy' (Stanley 2016). Marcuse's partisanship
is clear:

> The small and powerless minorities which struggle against the false
> consciousness and its beneficiaries must be helped: their continued ex-
> istence is more important than the preservation of abused rights and
> liberties which grant constitutional powers to those who oppress these
> minorities. (Marcuse 1965a, 110)

Today, Herbert Marcuse's critical refusal to tolerate abusive speech/action con-
stitutes one of the timeliest aspects of his critique of politics. During the mid-
1960s, Marcuse met Brandeis student Angela Davis, and began an intellectual/
political relationship that lasted well-beyond her student years (Davis 2013,
2004). He published his anti-racist essay, 'Repressive Tolerance,' at that time
(1965a), and dedicated it to students at Brandeis. This contains insights and ele-
ments that make it extremely pertinent as we debate how to best protect human

rights in this era of acrid backlash against the progress of the multicultural/intercultural education reform movement.

Given also the contemporary heightened awareness of the regularity of police killings of unarmed black men in the U.S. after incidents such as Ferguson, Baltimore, Cleveland, New York City, and elsewhere, Marcuse's condemnation of the violence of repression demands renewed attention. In 1965 Marcuse condemned the violence that actually prevails in the ostensibly peaceful centres of civilization: 'it is practiced by the police, in the prisons and the mental institutions, in the fight against racial minorities […] This violence indeed breeds violence' (Marcuse 1965a, 105).

More recently, a strategy for the defense of equal civil rights and intercultural solidarity with victims of hate speech has been developed by authors like Dolores Calderón (2006), Christine Sleeter and Dolores Delgado Bernal (2003), Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (1997), Mari Matsuda, Charles Lawrence, Richard Delgado and Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1993), and John K. Wilson (1995). They claim that freedom of speech is not absolute, and must be viewed in the context of its real political consequences.

Donald Trump's presidency has brought these issues to the fore, full force, in 2017:

> Donald Trump has a particular taste for the degradation of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities and women […] as a way of personal sense of racial, sexist, and patriarchal entitlement. And as he degrades, he plays to those very same entitlements in the base that elected him.[7]

Despite Trump's individual psychology or pathology, it is the *system's* politics at work here. Politics unleashes the 'new normal' through changes in the media, the law, the economy, education, etc. Trump's ascendency is only the most recent brash expression of the predatory political economy of race, class, and gender – and the earth-killing tendencies latent in the essential contradictions of capitalism. This essay unlike so many others today is *not* about Trump; it is about the *challenge and necessity of a new world system*.

Marcuse foresaw the end of capitalism precisely at a time of its greatest productive capacities and its greatest wealth accumulations. He believed he could discern U.S. societal disintegration from what was actually happening in the process of production itself. First, is the increasing unproductivity of those who control 'the destructive and wasteful development of the productive forces today' (Marcuse 1974/2015b, 33). As far back as 1974 he pointed out that the Pentagon was the nation's biggest single industrial enterprise with 14.2 million workers directly or indirectly dependent on military spending. '[I]f you throw together – which as an orthodox Marxist you might well do – unemployment and employment for the military services, you arrive at the following figures: a total of over 25% of the labour force, i.e. 22.3 million, were either unemployed

or dependent on military spending directly or indirectly' (Marcuse 1974/2015b, 42). This is a capitalism of *wasted abundance*. This is a capitalism with a frantic bourgeoisie aware that the preponderance of congealed labour (capital goods) over living labour is intensifying the tendency of the rate of profit therefore to fall. Never content to receive less than maximal returns, capital is today as always hungry for valorisation, seeking yields above average rates of profit. Hence there is wild speculation in search of maximum returns, and investment has also become more and more militarist and predatory; profits are still most soundly generated by wasteful war production. Likewise, any limited prosperity among war production workers is eluding masses of people whose conditions of life are becoming increasingly precarious.

Marcuse's condemnations of U.S. military aggression, its need for an 'enemy,' the irrationality of U.S. economic waste, destruction, and wealth distortions, etc., are particularly timely and deserve invigorated attention across this nation's campuses as well as in other cultural and political circles today. His political-philosophical vision, cultural critique, and social activism continue to offer an intelligent strategic perspective on such current concerns as repressive democracy, political and racial inequality, and education as social control – especially where issues of alienation, war, oppression, critical inquiry, critical media literacy, and civic/revolutionary action are involved. Marcuse's key ideas in *One-Dimensional Man* [*ODM*] (1964) countered the paralysis of criticism that pervaded advanced capitalism in the U.S. (Reitz 2016b). 'The fact that the vast majority of the population accepts, and is made to accept, this society does not render it less irrational and less reprehensible' (Marcuse 1964, xiii). *ODM*'s critical Marxism sought to break through the 'pre-established harmony between scholarship and the national purpose' (Marcuse 1964, 19). He maintained that the most important duty of the intellectual was to investigate destructive social circumstances – and be engaged in activities of transformation toward justice and peace (Marcuse 1975/1987a, 182).

The Frankfurt School's Critical Theory is sometimes criticized as having a narrowly Eurocentric focus (see Outlaw 2013; Gandler 1999). *ODM* expanded the cultural perspective through Marcuse's effort to encompass certain broadly critical projects already underway in the U.S.: the demystification of the vaunted myths of affluence and melting pot assimilation in American life (see Gordon 1964). Marcuse understood the reigning Anglo-conformity and WASP patriotism and militarism in the U.S., as well as its economic instrumentalism, as single-dimensional insofar as these were oblivious to the problematic nature of prevailing social and economic relations. If abundance for all was a capacity of advanced industrial society, this was effectively cancelled by forces of capitalism. Affluence for some was the privilege of the propertied. 'In the contemporary era, the conquest of scarcity is still confined to small areas of advanced industrial society. Their prosperity covers up the Inferno inside and outside their borders … ' (Marcuse 1964, 241); see also Marcuse's address, 'Liberation from the Affluent Society' (1967/1968). Marcuse understood the limits

of liberal democracy (Farr 2009, 119–36), and how the notion of the 'affluent society' actually masked a gravely unequal, patriarchal, and monocultural form of domination. Of course, the conventional wisdom within the nation itself was largely oblivious to its own racism and other forms of prejudice. In many ways it continues to be.

From 1944–1950 Horkheimer and Adorno, working with the American Jewish Committee, published a five-volume series, *Studies in Prejudice*. The fifth volume, *Prophets of Deceit*, written by Leo Löwenthal and Norbert Guterman, was furnished with a foreword by Herbert Marcuse when it was re-issued in paperback in 1970. Like Lukács in 1938, Marcuse stresses here that *any mobilization of bias must be understood concretely within the social context of contradictory economic and political conditions* (see Jansen 2013).

The year 1963, just before *ODM*'s publication, marked the culmination of the U.S. civil rights movement with its black-led (i.e. SCLC, CORE, and SNCC) bus boycotts, lunch-counter sit-ins, freedom rides, voter registration campaigns, and the March on Washington. These anti-racism efforts also involved the support of many radical and progressive whites, especially students.

In 1964 in *ODM*, given the background of recent and high profile lynchings, bombings, and murders of blacks in the U.S. (Emmett Till; Medgar Evers, the four girls in Birmingham's 16th Street Baptist church), Marcuse wrote: 'Those whose life is the hell of the Affluent Society are kept in line by a brutality which revives medieval and early modern practices' (Marcuse 1964, 23). As Nina Simone was singing 'Mississippi Goddamn' and castigating the 'United Snakes of America,' *ODM* famously concluded:

> … underneath the conservative popular base is the substratum of the outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colors […] Their opposition hits the system from without … it is an elementary force which violates the rules of the game. When they get together and go out into the streets, without arms, without protection, in order to ask for the most primitive civil rights, they know that they face dogs, stones, and bombs, jail, concentration camps, even death […] The critical theory of society […] wants to remain loyal to those who, without hope, have given and give their life to the Great Refusal. (Marcuse 1964, 257)

Above and beyond Marcuse's admiration for the bravery and leadership represented by the U.S. civil rights movement, Marcuse stressed that New Left radicals were not only conscious of a socialist economy's potential to eliminate want and misery; they put a new emphasis on *quality of life*, not just a secure subsistence. Marcuse prized this 'emergence in the individual of needs and satisfactions which can no longer be fulfilled within the framework of the capitalist system, although they were generated by the capitalist system itself' (Marcuse 1974/2015b, 53). ***These included the struggle for the restoration of***

nature, women's equality, racial equality, and elimination of profitable waste, planned obsolescence, ecological destruction (Marcuse 1972, 17; 1966–1976/ 2017, 30).

> [W]hat is at stake in the socialist revolution is not merely the extension of satisfaction within the existing universe of needs, nor the shift of satisfaction from one (lower) level to a higher one, but the rupture with this universe, the *qualitative leap*. The revolution involves a radical transformation of the needs and aspirations themselves, cultural as well as material; of consciousness and sensibility; of the work process as well as leisure. The transformation appears in the fight against the fragmentation of work, the necessity and productivity of stupid performances and stupid merchandise, against the acquisitive bourgeois individual, against the servitude in the guise of technology, deprivation in the guise of the good life, against pollution as a way of life. Moral and aesthetic needs become basic, vital needs and drive toward new relationships between the sexes, between the generations, between men and women and nature. Freedom is understood as rooted in these needs, which are sensuous, ethical, and rational in one.(Marcuse 1972, 16–17)

Marcuse links the transvaluation of values to radical system change. Kellner (1984, 339) notes that the transvaluation of values represented *the* new Reality Principle that Marcuse projected in *Eros and Civilization*. An echo of Nietzsche's critique of any morality of subservience – this was an 'Umwertung aller Werte' in the direction of a greater appreciation for joy, exuberance, and freedom in living (Reitz 2017, 29n). Marcuse was among the earliest radical writers to focus on issues of ecological ruin, see for example 'Ecology and Revolution' (1972/2005b), much more on this below. Given the general destructiveness of modern society, Marcuse recognizes the need for a reconciliation of alienated humanity with the natural world, a pacification of the struggle for existence. *In his estimation this requires a change in the conditioned needs of individuals – away from those which promise compensatory satisfactions (generated by the mechanism of repressive desublimation) within a totally commercialized and commodified life – toward New Sensibilities.* He saw the existing structure of needs is being subverted.

6.1.2. The Popular Expression of Discontent: Marcuse's New Sensibility

As early as 1975 Marcuse maintained:

> … capitalism destroys itself as it progresses! Therefore no reforms make sense. **The notion that the society, *as a whole* is sick, destructive, hopelessly outdated, has found *popular expression:* 'loss of faith' in**

the system; decline in the work ethic, refusal to work, etc. […] The general form of the internal contradictions of capitalism has *never been more blatant*, more cruel, more costly of human lives and happiness. And – this is the *significance of the Sixties* – this blatant irrationality has not only penetrated the consciousness of a large part of the population, it has also caused, mainly among the young people, a radical *transformation of needs and values* which may prove to be *incompatible* with the capitalist system, its hierarchy, priorities, morality, symbols (the counter-culture, ecology) … (Marcuse 1975/2015a, 304–307, emphasis added)

This is from Marcuse's 1975 typescript 'Why Talk on Socialism?' His philosophy, practically from the beginning, addressed the deep roots of the capitalist system's functioning and its crisis: the commodification of labour, burgeoning inequality, wasted abundance (especially in war), lives without meaningful purpose, and the inadequacy of one-dimensional American liberalism. Marcuse understood as single-dimensional, any perspective that is oblivious to the problematic nature of prevailing social and economic relations. One-dimensionality is the triumph of a 'happy consciousness' grounded in the suffocation and repression of life's internal inconsistencies and contradictions. Yet pockets of protest created a New Sensibility comprising an oppositional philosophy and politics:

Changed/needs are present, here and now. They permeate the lives of individuals […] First the need for drastically reducing socially necessary alienated labor and replacing it with creative work. Second, the need for autonomous free time instead of directed leisure. Third, the need for an end of role playing. Fourth, the need for receptivity, tranquillity and abounding joy, instead of the constant noise of production […] The spectre which haunts advanced industrial society today is the obsolescence of full-time alienation. (Marcuse 1979/2011, 211).

6.1.3. Marcuse's Critical Economic Theory: Labour and Alienation

Marcuse developed a critical study of work and social alienation looking at economic activity within the total complexity of other human activities and human existence in general. Marcuse's critical social theory has special relevance to U.S. culture today centring on his analysis of the *commodified labour process* as a structural source of social inequality and economic crisis, and the *power of labour* to liberate itself from commodification and exploitation to make *commonwealth* the human condition. I shall expand upon the concept

of commonwealth below, which I derive from Marcuse's critical philosophy of labour and his radical eco-socialism.

I have sought in *Crisis and Commonwealth* (Reitz 2013/2015) to recover Marcuse's philosophy of labour from its relative obscurity. In *Philosophy and Critical Pedagogy* I have defended Marcuse's view that the felt needs of *sensuous living labour* insist upon political movement from the minimal to the radical goals of socialism (Reitz 2016a, 127–28, 155). I also attempted there to develop a labour theory of ethical action and commonwealth and show how this undergirds Marcuse's desire to *rehumanize* the labour process and our very mode of existence (Reitz 2016a, 125–48).

Sensuous living labour is my term for the elemental form of the human material condition that I find theorized within in the social philosophies of Marx and Marcuse. *Labour* here is not to be reduced to any form of class circumstance. Sensuous living labour is the substrate of our being as humans. It is the foundation of our affective and intellectual capacities (and vulnerabilities), bio-ecologically developed within history. As a species we have endured because of our sensuous appreciation of our emergent powers: the power to subsist cooperatively; to create, communicate, and care communally within what Marx called a *Gemeinwesen*, and which I call a *commonwealth*. Our earliest proverbs, fables, and riddles teach the survival power of partnership and cooperation and the categorical ethical advantages empathy, reciprocity, hospitality, and respect for the good in common. Humanity experiences the satisfactions/dissatisfactions derived from our bio-ecologically generated economic, aesthetic, intellectual, and moral standards gravitating toward the humanism of a communally labouring commonwealth. Having brought into being these universalizable value criteria, our cultural, political, and emotional conditions can be characterized *critically* as *authentic* (when consistent with the *fullest potentials* of our species being,[8] i.e. what Marx called our *Gattungswesen*) or as *alienated* (when social power structurally distorts or denies humanity such authenticity).

If living labour creates all wealth, as John Locke (1690/1983)[9] and Adam Smith (1776/1937)[10] have maintained, then it creates all the value that is under capitalism distributed as income to labour (wages and salaries) and to capital (rent, interest, dividends, and profit). Marx and Marcuse stressed that labour is a *social* process, that the value created through labour is most genuinely measured by socially necessary labour time, and its product rightfully *belongs* to the labour force as a *body*, not to individuals as such, i.e. grounding a *socialist labour theory of ownership and justice* (Reitz 2013/2015, 19–41, 175–204).

Marx and Marcuse encompassed the theories of Locke and Smith within a larger philosophy of labour. Where Locke and Smith saw individual labour as the source of private property, in an atomistic (Robinsonian) manner, Marx recognized that all humans are born into a social context. Humanity's earliest *customs*, i.e. communal production, shared ownership, and solidarity assured that the needs of all were met, i.e. including those not directly involved

in production like children, the disabled, and the elderly. This right of the commonwealth to govern itself, and humanity's earliest ethic of holding property in common, derive only secondarily from factual individual contributions to production; they are rooted primarily in our essentially shared species being as humans, as sensuous living labour.

As I see it, a commonwealth arrangement of the state and economy means to hold, control, and conserve resources as elements of the public domain. It means to eliminate rent-seeking and the for-profit financial industry as modes of privilege, distribute incomes without reference to individual productivity according to need and as equally as feasible, substantially reduce hours of labour, and make possible, through socialist general education privileging no single culture or language, the well-rounded scientific and multicultural development of the young. If we say the human species is a multicultural species because humans have lived in a variety of geographical settings in various historical circumstances, we mean to acknowledge that a diversity of cultures has emerged. Certain of these cultures, as with the Anglo-American imperium, have displaced and dominated others in contravention of the egalitarian commonwealth principles advocated here.

Real structured interconnection exists in our economic lives. *Economic* theory can be called *critical* only if it penetrates beneath empirical economic facts and given ideologies to discern generative economic and labour structures that are neither obvious nor apparent. Usually concealed, the structure and dynamics of the value production process are to be made visible in their material form. This crucial dynamic undergirds the over-appropriation of capital and the intensifying dehumanization accompanying the vastly unequal distribution of wealth in the U.S. These economic structures are at the root of this country's recurring recessions and economic depressions. The recent global economic dislocations demand a re-thinking of critical theory with greater focus on issues of our economic alienation and dehumanization, the powers of our commonwork and commonwealth, and the rehumanization/intercultural solidarity of world politics.

Over the last several decades there has been a regression in the comprehensiveness and materiality of critical philosophy. This is true in particular given the postmodern penchant to reduce social theory to aesthetic theory. A comprehensive critical social theory must stress the centrality of labour in the economy. It must help us to apprehend the dialectic of the historical and material world and the changing social condition of humanity within it. It must theorize the origins and outcomes of economic and cultural oppression and be engaged politically with the Labour force to end them. I offer a more rigorously historical and material alternative perspective.

The fuller potential and power of labour, as recognized by Locke and Smith, challenges the presumption that *capital* produces value, the view that profit *unilaterally* accrues as a reward for the contribution of the investor/employer. Labour provides the total value added in the production process. Profit is a *subtraction* from the overall value produced. A *critical* appreciation of work

turns right side round the empiricist assertion that employers are paying their employees, and demonstrates that *employees are paying their employers*.

Inequalities of income and wealth have been *increasing* over the last three decades in the United States, a tendency established well before the current economic fiasco in the banking and real estate industries. Middle range households have lost the most in absolute terms, about 20% of their wealth between 1984 and 2004. These middle range losses are the toll of capitalist globalization.

The Americanization/globalization of the world-wide economy aims at the overall reduction of payrolls on the global assembly line, no matter the greater levels of manufacturing employment in developing countries. My thesis is that *inequality is not simply a matter of the gap between rich and poor, but of the structural relationships in the economic arena between propertied and non-propertied segments of populations*. This is the crux of Marx's class theory, and I am arguing that his model in this sense was (and still is) correct and more helpful than a purely wealth-centric notion of class. The crisis conditions which afflict the U.S. economy today need to be understood not only in terms of predatory financialization dynamics, but also as *a war on labour*.

6.1.4. *From* Commodity-Dependency *to* De-commodification

This society is fully capable of abundance as Marcuse recognized in *One Dimensional Man,* yet the material foundation for the persistence of economic want and political unfreedom is *commodity-dependency*. Work, as the most crucial of all human activities, by which humanity has developed to its present stage of civilization, can be and should be a source of human satisfaction. Under capitalism it is reduced to a mere means for the receipt of wages. Sensuous living labourers are reduced to being mere containers for the only commodity they can bring to the system of commodity exchange, their ability to work. This represents the commodification of the most essential aspect of human life. Necessities of life are available to the public nearly exclusively as commodities through market mechanisms based upon ability to pay.

Commodified existence is not natural; it is contrived. Significant portions of commodified social life need to be rethought. What are the most intelligent/wisest uses of labour? I emphasize (Reitz 2015, 177, 183, 200n) how the transformation of commodified human labour into *public* work, i.e. work that aims at the public good rather than private accumulation (Boyte and Kari 1996), would undergird progressive political advance. Work in the public interest in the public sector expands areas of the economy traditionally considered the public domain, the commonwealth: social needs oriented projects like libraries, parks, utilities, the media, telephone service, postal service, transportation, social services, especially care for the young and the elderly.

The decommodification of services in these areas, along with a guaranteed minimum income, would supply a socialist alternative its viability. So too the

decommodification of health care, housing, and education. Already we see that areas within the field of information technology are pregnant with the possibility of decommodification: public-domain software and shareware on the internet, market-free access to Skype, etc. The demand for decommodification sets Marcuse's analysis – and ours – distinctly apart from a *liberal* call for a 'politics of recognition' (Honneth 1994) that features primarily *attitudinal* or only *redistributive* remedies.

While recognition and redistribution are certainly necessary, they are not sufficient. The slogan 'tax the rich,' while fundamentally helpful in *liberal* terms, misses the *radical socialist* point that the cure for the harsh distributional inequalities cited above lies in a *new mode of property ownership* that restructures the very process of value creation, as well as the inextricably interconnected processes of exchange and consumption. No non-socialist theory of education or society has any profound quarrel with wage labour or the general system of commodity dependency. Marx admonishes workers: '…instead of the *conservative* motto "*A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!*" they should inscribe on their banner the *revolutionary* watchword, "*Abolition of the wages-system!*" (Marx 1865/1965, 78). Marx clarified capitalist society's obsession with production for profit rather than human need: its structurally generated fetish/addiction to production for commodity exchange rather than for use-values. Production for use rather than exchange would optimize living conditions within the social formation as a whole. Capitalist productive relations are driving global labour to its knees. Only the abolition of wage labour and commodity fetishism in the economy can restore satisfaction and dignity to an uncommodified labour process.

6.2. Leopold and Marcuse on Environmental Destruction and Revolutionary Ecological Liberation

Aldo Leopold was dissatisfied with any merely lyrical romanticizing of nature, as in Goethe's 'Mailied' [May Song]: '*Wie herrlich leuchtet mir die Natur'* – 'How stirring and splendid Nature can be!' Instead, he pursued Alexander Humboldt's 'everything is interconnected' approach, recognizing how humanity's inner capacities adapt to the world's ecosystems, and that our insight into these ecosystems builds our fuller, more comprehensive understanding of life as a whole, i.e., including aesthetics, ethics, and politics. Humboldt's writing on plant ecology, geography, geology, and much more, of necessity also condemned sugar plantation slavery as a denatured and disfiguring economic form where he found it in Cuba (Foner 1983). Humboldt maintained the unity of the human race, against Agassiz, who promoted racial hierarchy. Humboldt's work influenced Henry David Thoreau and John Muir as well as the thinking of the most profound ecological philosopher of the twentieth century, Aldo Leopold. This Sand County, Wisconsin, forester and nature writer knew the earth was

awesome, knew the earth was radical. Above and beyond its beauty, he saw that living on the face of our planet with dignity is possible, and holds the promise of *ethical, political, and aesthetic* meaning for human communities.

Leopold (1949/1966, 218–219) understood earth (i.e. land) scientifically as a biotic system to which humanity belongs. This led him to a logic of protection, love, and respect for nature – both in recreation and in social production. He explicitly developed what he called a 'land ethic' that enlarged the boundaries of the concept of 'community' to include soils, water, plants, animals, air, and people. He replaced a view of humanity as conqueror of the land-community with a vision of human inhabitants of a green commonwealth. To Leopold *nature was considered to be a community to which humanity belongs.* 'Green Commonwealth' is my term, not his, but it encapsulates his conviction that ecological science leads to ecological conscience: to conservation and coopera-tion. Ecological science discloses 'the tendency of interdependent individuals or groups to evolve modes of cooperation […] All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of in-terdependent parts' (Leopold 1949/1966, 218–219).

A militant defense of the earth and its people occupied much of Marcuse's fi-nal year of life. His essay, 'Ecology and the Critique of Modern Society' (Marcuse 1979/2011) deserves wider recognition. He discusses 'the destruction of nature in the context of the general destructiveness which characterizes our society' –

> Under the conditions of advanced industrial society, satisfaction is al-ways tied to destruction. The domination of nature is tied to the vio-lation of nature. The search for new sources of energy is tied to the poisoning of the life environment. (Marcuse 1979/2011, 209)

It is very telling that Marcuse frames his discussion of a destructive and author-itarian character structure within 'the concerted power of big capital' (Marcuse 1979/2011, 212):

> [T]he destructive character structure so prominent in our society to-day, must be seen in the context of the institutionalized destructiveness characteristic of both foreign and domestic affairs. This institutional-ized destructiveness is well-known, and examples thereof are easy to provide. They include the constant increase in the military budget at the expense of social welfare, the proliferation of nuclear installations, the general poisoning and polluting of our life environment, the blatant subordination of human rights to the requirements of global strategy, and the threat of war in case of a challenge to this strategy. This institu-tionalized destruction is both open and legitimate. It provides the con-text within which the individual reproduction of destructiveness takes place. (Marcuse 1979/2011, 207)

In his analysis there is no separation between individual psychology and social psychology. He theorizes 'the potential forces of social change are there. Those forces present the potential for emergence of a character structure in which emancipatory drives gain ascendency over compensatory ones' (Marcuse 1979/2011, 210).

> Can we now speculate, against Freud, that the striving for a state of freedom from pain pertains to Eros, to the life instincts, rather than to the death instinct? If so, this wish for fulfilment would attain its goal not in the beginning of life, but in the flowering and maturity of life. It would serve, not as a wish to return, but as a wish to progress. It would serve to protect and enhance life itself. The drive for painlessness, for the pacification of existence, would then seek fulfilment in protective care for living things. It would find fulfilment in the recapture and restoration of our life environment, and in the restoration of nature, both external and within human beings. This is just the way in which I view today's environmental movement, today's ecology movement. The ecology movement reveals itself in the last analysis as a political and psychological movement of liberation. It is political because it confronts the concerted power of big capital, whose vital interests the movement threatens. It is psychological because (and this is a most important point) the pacification of external nature, the protection of the life-environment, will also pacify nature within men and women. A successful environmentalism will, within individuals, subordinate destructive energy to erotic energy. (Marcuse 1979/2011, 212)

Marcuse explains that a politicization of erotic energy has resulted in the appearance of new goals, new behaviour, and new language in movements for radical social change. The individual's New Sensibility may well even energize protest and 'counteract the neglect of the individual found in traditional radical practice' (Marcuse 1979/2011, 210).

Marcuse's 1972 essay 'Ecology and Revolution' had previously noted the revival of student protest at the time, not only against the Vietnam War, but also in the ecology movement protesting against 'the violation of the Earth' which it increasingly saw as a 'vital aspect of the counterrevolution.' Marcuse emphasized that the bombing of Vietnam was also to be seen as a 'capitalist response to the attempt at *revolutionary ecological liberation*: the bombs are meant to prevent the people of North Vietnam from undertaking the economic and social rehabilitation of the land' (Marcuse 1972/2005, 174 emphasis added). We cringe still today at the thought of Trump's reactionary opposition to the Paris climate accords and his appointment of anti-ecology ideologists to the Departments of the Interior (Ryan Zinke), Energy (Rick Perry), and the Environmental Protection Agency (Scott Pruitt).

The revolt of youth (students, workers, women), undertaken in the name of the values of freedom and happiness, is an attack on all the values which govern

the capitalist system. And this revolt is oriented toward the pursuit of a radically different natural and technical environment; this perspective has become the basis for subversive experiments such as the attempts by American 'communes' to establish non-alienated relations between the sexes, between generations, between man and nature – attempts to sustain the consciousness of refusal and of renovation. (Marcuse 1972/2005, 174)

We have seen of course how often the ecological movement has been co-opted and harmonized with the perspective of a 'green capitalism.' Nonetheless, its system critique continually re-emerges:

> Increasingly, the ecological struggle comes into conflict with the laws which govern the capitalist system: the law of increased accumulation of capital, of the creation of sufficient surplus value, of profit, of the necessity of perpetuating alienated labor and exploitation. Michel Bosquet put it very well: the ecological logic is purely and simply the negation of capitalist logic; the earth can't be saved within the framework of capitalism; the Third World can't be developed according to the model of capitalism. (Marcuse 1972/2005, 175).

For Marcuse 'the issue is not the purification of the existing society but its replacement' (Marcuse 1972/2005, 175).

6.2.1. Marxist Ecological Materialism

Also warranting our attention is the recent publication of a new compendium of essays on the global architecture of wealth and resource extraction grounded in Marx's perspective on capitalism's 'ecological rift' dividing humanity from the natural world by John Bellamy Foster, Brett Clark and Richard York (2010). These authors stress the dialectical unity embodied in an historical materialist approach to the scientific study of nature and society and Marx's philosophically realist ontological and epistemological dimensions.

> The world is being subjected to a process of monopolistic capital accumulation so extreme and distorted that not only has it produced the Great Inequality and conditions of stagnation and financial instability, but also the entire planet as a place of human habitation is being put in peril in order to sustain this very system. Hence the future of humanity – if there is to be one at all – now lies with the 99%. (Foster & McChesney 2012, 26)

Concerns arising from the transformation of the natural environment by human beings are not new. Yet the increase in the rate of consumption of natural resources from the industrial revolution to the present has sounded the alarm regarding the magnitude of the consequences for the environment in the near term as well as over decades. The concern is ultimately about the environment's

ability to continue to renew and rejuvenate itself in the long run. The intensity of the debate today across the globe is unprecedented. To address these most urgent issues we must address the influence of powerful classes in society and undertake a collective politics in the collective interest.

The notions of ecological metabolism and ecological rift are elucidated by Foster et al. via Marx's discussion of 'wood thieves.' Ecological metabolism refers to the interchange of matter and energy between humanity and nature through life-sustaining social structures. Because of the enclosures of the common forest lands as private estates, the taking of dead wood by peasants, as had been common practice, was criminalized by landowners who asserted that this wood supply (never before sold or exchanged) had an economic value as a commodity which they owned and for which they must be paid. Thus the peasantry was separated from the natural and social world it had inhabited. Likewise today most of the resources of the earth and cultural assets of its people (including Labour, leadership and learning), that once sustained humanity in common, are now privatized, marketed as scarce commodities, often grotesquely distributed involving patterns of privilege and waste. The rift between nature and the capitalist global order is expressed as generalized commodity-dependency, i.e., massive economic and political unfreedom, i.e., alienation.

According to Foster, Clark and York, '[t]he essential problem is the unavoidable fact that an expanding economic system is placing additional burdens on a fixed earth system to the point of planetary overload' (2010, 17). These co-authors supply an historical context by discussing some of the manifold manifestations of earth exhaustion: ocean acidification, pollution of the globe's freshwater supply, biodiversity loss, atmospheric aerosol loading, chemical pollution, the energy crisis from coal to oil, the climate/carbon metabolism crisis, i.e., climate change. Each of these rifts is shown to be a result of the expansion of capitalist production and the squandering of natural resources via capitalism's unstinting architecture of accumulation. Foster and Clark (2004) hold that even our understanding of imperialism has been,

> … impeded by the underdevelopment of an ecological materialist analysis of capitalism in Marxist theory as a whole. Nevertheless, it has long been apparent – and was stipulated in Marx's own work – that transfers in economic values are accompanied in complex ways by real 'material-ecological' flows that transform relations between city and country, and between global metropolis and periphery. (Foster and Clark 2004, 187)

Today's intensifying levels of global earth exhaustion coupled with intensified economic exploitation and resurgent social inequalities (of class, race, and gender) necessitate intellectual and political growth on the part of every one of us. The convergence of the environmentalist and Labour movements is essential in terms of a unified emancipatory praxis if the human species is to go on living.

6.2.2. Global Solidarity: The Green Commonwealth Counter-Offensive

The history of the economic relationships between and among countries of the world has also been a history of domination, peaceful coexistence, and war. Today humanity is acutely aware of our interconnectedness to the planet and the damaging role played by rapacious imperialism. *The promise of Green Commonwealth is that of socio-cultural equality and sustainable political-economic abundance.*

Social movements against inequalities of race, gender, and class have been the civilizing forces of our age; authoritarian populist movements, on the contrary, intensify the damage of division. Black Lives Matter (BLM) has effectively educated the nation about the cavalier use of racist deadly force (on and off the campus) and the real nature of undemocratic governance. The organized social struggles against racism, sexism, poverty, war, and imperialism, have educated wide swaths of this country's population outside traditional classrooms about alienation and oppression, power and empowerment. The 'New Social Movements' at the start of the twenty-first century learned to ally crucially with labour. In this regard I differ from Habermas (1981), who stresses the ostensible independence of these contemporary movements from labour. I am making the case that the latent emancipatory power of labour is axial to both revolutionary theory and praxis. The militant anti-globalization action in Seattle 1999 against corporate capitalism, the World Trade Organization, and other international financial institutions, united 'teamsters and turtles,' activist elements of organized labour in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world with environmentalist organizations, in a massive confrontation with the paramilitary police power that protected the representatives of global capital as they consolidated their payroll-slashing and earth-bashing investment strategies, through outsourcing and 'race to the bottom.' In 2001, a similar confrontation occurred in Genoa, Italy. This was one of the most enormous demonstrations against global finance capital Europe had seen in years. The 2011 and 2012 anti-austerity uprisings in Athens, Rome, Madrid, and elsewhere were equally spectacular and militant. So too the massive student protests against tuition increases in Montreal, Quebec during March, May, and August 2012. These struggles echo the worker-student protests in Paris 1968, and the new forms of political-economic thinking emergent from the now regular meetings of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil and elsewhere. Then there are also the left populist movements of SYRIZA in Greece, Podemos in Spain, and even the Bernie Sanders campaign in the United States.

Radical authors today are coming to realize also that: 'the only way forward is a new arrangement, based on ones that have better served societies since the dawn of civilization' (Pettifor 2012, 24). Just one indication of this advancing perspective is that of British ecological economist, Brian Davey, who suggests as a new socialist starting point 'the philosophy, culture, and political economic ideas of a diversity of indigenous communities and tribes in the Andean region'

(Davey 2012). These peoples were modelling a 'solidarity economy' blending ecology and socialism after a long history of colonial oppression, racism, and sexism. The contemporary combination of socialism and ecological policy is likewise seen by others (Kozloff 2008; Bateman 2012; Sitrin 2012) as offering further examples in Spain, Argentina, Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia, Brazil, and elsewhere. These 'new' arrangements are derived from the commonwealth practices that prevailed for the longest period in human history in ancient African (and subsequently other, e.g. Minoan) partnership societies, and which persist in the contemporary labour theory of ethics and commonwealth. A Green Commonwealth counter-offensive is the political challenge today.

In a recent essay Jodi Dean emphasized that 'at a minimal level, if we are to have a chance of taking power, of reformatting the basic conditions under which we live and work, *we have to share a name in common. …*' (Dean 2015). Where she is proposing the formation of a revolutionary party, I am suggesting we need to form a prefigurative *alliance of working groups* around the *Promise of Green Commonwealth* and to constitute a *Green Commonwealth Counter-Offensive*. She recommends as one of the prefigurative forms of party organization:

> Trusting others' skills and knowledge is essential if we are to form ourselves into a political force capable of addressing global capital. This suggests the utility of working groups in multiple locales and issue areas – groups with enough autonomy to be responsive and enough direction to carry out a common purpose, which itself would have to be hashed out and to which all would have to be committed. (Dean 2015)

Commonwealth has the power to reclaim our common humanity. Its 'radical' goal is decommodification: public work for the public good. Humanity's *rights* to a commonwealth economy, politics, and culture reside in our commonworks. This involves sensuous living labour authentically actualizing itself through humanist activism and creativity – humanity remaking itself through a social labour process in accordance with the commonwealth promise at the core of our material reality. This requires *a new system of shared ownership*, democratized ownership, and common ownership. Commonwealth is humanity's (that is, sensuous living labour's) aesthetic form: workmanship and artistry, emancipated from repression, taking place not only 'in accordance with the laws of beauty,'[11] but also according to the labour theory of ethics and ecological responsibility – Green Commonwealth.

Commonwealth is living labour's promise. This is the radically socialist logic of commonwealth production, ownership, stewardship: bring to fruition, *within* the realm of necessity, an intercultural architecture of equality, disalienation, ecological balance, freedom, and abundance.

The current period is one of economic crisis, change, and danger, including that of authoritarian populism. Today's global capitalist crisis is a crucial

opportunity for a new radically emancipatory beginning in pursuit of racial equality, gender equality, the liberation of labour, the restoration of nature, leisure, abundance, and peace. a new political beginning.

The goal of building a universal human community on the foundation of universal human rights must acknowledge *the fundamental role of the labour process in the sustenance of the human community.* Human labour has the irreplaceable power to build the commonwealth, past and future. Our current conditions of insecurity and risk make it imperative that we undertake a deeper understanding of the necessity of *a humanist commonwealth alternative: an egalitarian, affluent, green political-economy* through which humanity may govern itself beautifully in terms of our fullest potential, mindful of the fragile magnificence of the earth.

Notes

[1] Stacey Patton, 'White People Understand Exactly How Racism Works', *DAME Magazine*, 16 January 2018. https://www.damemagazine.com/2018/01/16/white-people-understand-exactly-how-racism-works/ Retrieved 17 January 2018.

[2] See Elwin H. Powell, 'Revolution Aborted, Society Sacralized, Class War in Buffalo, 1910–1920', in *The Design of Discord* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970) p. 101.

[3] 'In the early 20th century, state-sanctioned collective violence targeting African Americans was a common occurrence in the United States. 1919 was an especially bloody year.' —David Krugler, 'America's Forgotten Mass Lynching: When 237 People Were Murdered In Arkansas', *Daily Beast*, 16 February 2015. https://www.thedailybeast.com/americas-forgotten-mass-lynching-when-237-people-were-murdered-in-arkansas retrieved 16 February 2018.

[4] David M. Kotz, 'Social Structure of Accumulation Theory, Marxist Theory, and System Transformation.' *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 2017 Vol. 49 (4): 534.

[5] Sincere thanks to editor Jeremiah Morelock for key critical insights. Colleagues Mehdi S. Shariati, Stephen Spartan, Morteza Ardebili, and David Brodsky contributed materially to the ideas presented here. See also Reitz 2016a, 2016b, 2015, 2000a, 2009b, 2002, 2000.

[6] See Elwin H. Powell, 'Revolution Aborted, Society Sacralized, Class War in Buffalo, 1910–1920', in *The Design of Discord* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970). After WWI many and diverse forces clamoured for progressive social reform, even revolution. Powell discusses the role of the media in the mobilization of bias against immigrants and radicals during the 'Red Scare' in Buffalo, NY, and role of the local and federal (i.e. FBI) police-state tactics of intimidation and deportation in the Palmer Raids. Emphatic

counterrevolutionary Americanism, patriotism, and white supremacy, re-inforced the 'sanctity of the prevailing order of society.'

7 Charles M. Blow, 'Trump's Boogeymen? Women!' in *The New York Times* Monday, 23 October 2017, A21.

8 Marx, *Paris Manuscripts* XXIV: 'Man is a species being […] he adopts the species as his object […] because treats himself as the actual living species; because he treats himself as a universal and therefore a free being.' Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* edited by Dirk J. Struik (New York: International Publishers, 1964) p. 112.

9 John Locke, *An Essay Concerning the True Original Extent and End of Civil Government*, Chapter 5, Paragraph #27.

10 Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Book One, Chapter 8, Para. 1, 2, and 8.

11 Marx, *Paris Manuscripts* XXIV: 'An animal forms things in accordance with the standard and the need of the species to which it belongs, whilst man knows how to produce in accordance with the standard of every species, and knows how to apply everywhere the inherent standard to the object. Man therefore also forms things in accordance with the laws of beauty.' Marx drew this phrase on the laws of beauty from Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man;* see also Marcuse 1969, page 26, on art as a productive social force. Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* edited by Dirk J. Struik (New York: International Publishers, 1964) p. 113–114.

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CHAPTER 7

Public Sphere and World-System: Theorizing Populism at the Margins

Jeremiah Morelock and Felipe Ziotti Narita

The rise of populism and its authoritarian variations over the last decade has not been confined to the West. Recent academic literature/debate on populism[1] points out that the global populist surge constitutes a diffuse set of political and economic categories (rhetoric, style, identity, etc.) that can also be perceived at the margins of the West in countries like Hungary, South Korea, the Philippines, Bolivia, Poland, and Venezuela (Sowa and Ciobanu 2016; Nilsson-Wright 2016; Stewart and Wasserstrom 2016; Juego 2017; Nowak 2014; Petkovski 2015). Further, while populist movements may have their most palpable manifestations within the geographical and political parameters of particular nation-states, all nation-states are dynamically inextricable from global capitalism. Hence, all populist movements take place within a global context, and are shaped not just by the race and class composition of particular nations, but also by the race and class composition of the capitalist world-system, and the place of particular nations within the global compositional order. To theorize populism adequately, due focus must be dedicated to its manifestations in countries other than the Western core, as well as to its transnational dynamics. This chapter illustrates an effort at elaborating and analysing an open-ended theoretical scheme on these dynamics through the prisms of critical theory (Jürgen Habermas) and world-systems analysis (Immanuel Wallerstein). We develop this scheme in

application to authoritarian populism in general, and specifically to populisms in the history of peripheral and semi-peripheral countries of Latin America in their world-systems context.

Habermas and Wallerstein are not the most intuitive thinkers to pair together in dialogue, notably due to Wallerstein's Marxian focus on global economic processes and Habermas' linguistic and Weberian focus on communication and rationality. Habermas is not as far from Marxism in his earlier work, however, including his theorization of the bourgeois public sphere (1962/1992), his updating and embellishing Marx's crisis theory into his own theory of 'legitimation crisis' (1975), and in his efforts at 'reconstructing' historical materialism (1976).[2] He also included Freudian psychoanalysis in his earlier work (1978). In large part his early work reached an apex in the 1980s in the form of a two-volume magnum opus (1984, 1987) that also marked his full break from Marx and Freud; and by extension marked his break from the original *critical* foundations of the Frankfurt School. Recently – perhaps inspired by the threat of populist movements of the far-right emerging across the globe – scholars have become impatient with Habermas, Honneth, and others of the contemporary Frankfurt School designation who do *not* take influence from Marx, Nietzsche, or Freud; and correspondingly *do* take much of the critical edge out of critical theory (see Thompson 2016).

Rather than tossing Habermas aside completely, we suggest he may still be useful for truly critical work, provided his theories are put into dialogue with appropriate others.[3] Indeed, linking communicative rationality with the dynamics of global capital can give us a broader picture than just sticking to one or the other – provided of course that the links can convincingly be forged. This chapter is constructed as a modest offering toward this aim. We hope it may serve as a basis for further theoretical and empirical work. In a similar vein, we present our theoretical scheme without pretensions to finality or totalization. Yet this tentativeness is not just an expression of our conviction that modesty must be exercised in connecting these thinkers as we do here; it is also an expression of a methodological strategy to use theory in an open and loose fashion. We do not propose a deterministic Habermasian–Wallersteinian theory of populism. Instead, we identify non-deterministic structural preconditions of populism, and we situate these preconditions within a world-systems framework, identifying sites of contact and potential synthesis of Habermas' and Wallerstein's theories especially as they pertain to varieties of populism in the periphery and semi-periphery in Latin America.

Our discussion, in this sense, is divided into three main components: (1) a conceptual delimitation of populism and its authoritarian variations; (2) an outline of some of Habermas' and Wallerstein's theories as they pertain to populism; and (3) an attempt at bringing Habermas' and Wallerstein's theoretical models into conversation via an operational scheme dealing with world-systems analysis and the problem of the public sphere and lifeworld, which we apply to (semi)peripheral regions. The theoretical and historical terrain we

cover is broad here, and complex. In a sense, we have cracked open a can of rhizomatic worms. We hope to encourage further theoretical work that combines Habermas and Wallerstein, and focuses on peripheral and semi-peripheral regions, in order to further analyse the anatomy of populism at the margins.

7.1. Authoritarian Populism: Conceptual Delimitation

Populism always appeals to a claimed 'people' (Touraine 1997, 239). Yet as an interpolated collective subject, 'the people' can carry different meanings, depending on how civil actors are incorporated into politics (Katsambekis 2016). And here lies the ambivalence of populism in the context of democracy: populist movements seek legitimation through ideological hegemony. To this end, they use the banner of 'the people' to integrate discontents into a collective narrative. In this sense, instead of a mere political pathology that rises within weak political institutions (Sorj and Martuccelli 2008), populism can be understood as an emergence of political representation that stretches beyond the institutional procedures of representative democracy. According to Panizza (2005, 11), thus, populism is not always and only about a crisis of representation; it can also be the beginning of representation for previously excluded subpopulations. In other words, even if populism can arise from a crisis of previously established and cohesive political representation, actual populist practices cannot be reduced to this framework.

Populist movements are always at least partially a response to the anomic impacts of rapid social change. In Calhoun's (2010) terms, populism is a movement of discontent and reaction, and should not be assumed to involve a well-reasoned programme for moving forward. Hence it is a defensive uprising. A population becomes dispossessed, and rises up to reclaim the stability, centrality, and dignity they believe should be theirs, as 'the people' of a particular nation. In tandem, Calhoun maintains populism *per se* is not a right-wing or left-wing phenomenon.[4] Jan Werner-Müller (2016) offers a comprehensive typological divide between left and right variants of populism. Left-wing populism involves the revolt of 'the people' against the elite. Right-wing populism involves the revolt of 'the people' against the elite *and an underclass or scapegoat subpopulation*, 'the people' viewing the elite and underclass/scapegoat as in association. When the cleavage is along class lines, left populism will be a movement of the lower class(es), whereas right populism will be a movement of the middle class(es).

The participatory imaginary and the central figure of the strong leader span populisms across the political spectrum. Populism typically involves a charismatic approach to politics that narratively reduces elite persons and established institutions to bastions of corruption. In the wake of this problem of representation, polarization constitutes a major feature of populist politics. At this point, there is a remarkable ambivalence in the collective appeal to the people. As exclusive and inclusive modalities of the 'we' (Arditi 2007, 14), the social

antagonism deals with dichotomies like we/they, inclusion/exclusion, etc. This point reveals that populism, besides a political practice and a way of conducting *the political*, is a *social* and *discursive* phenomenon (Rosanvallon 2011). In broad Habermasian (1989) terms, populism concerns more than just the system level of society; it also takes place in the *lifeworld*, which needs to be examined at least partly on its own terms, or without analytical reduction to being a reflection or expression of systemic developments.

To illustrate this argument, consider the problem of politically representing 'the people.' Populist efforts and the social polarizations that surround them centrally concern identities and their attendant narratives. Nation, ethnicity and social dichotomies (elite/people, insiders/outsiders etc.) play important roles in this sense. Populist movements vary according to their capacity for mass mobilization, this mobilization operating as a kind of counterweight (Roberts 2006) to the 'elite' or the 'establishment.' The political conflicts they inspire involve shocks to prevailing identity relations (Ociepka 2006), polarizing public allegiances and affections (Demertzis 2006) regarding who to categorize as 'the people' and what rights to ascribe to them vis-à-vis other subpopulations – the nationalist rhetoric of Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orbán and Fidesz (the ruling nationalist-conservative political party) (Hlousek and Kopecek 2010, 173) illustrates this situation both in its materiality (with the building of a wall on the Croatian border in 2015 and the anti-immigrant fences on the Serbian border in 2017 in response to the refugee crisis in the Balkans) and in its ideological dimension (we can remember, in this sense, Orbán's 'five threats' in 2017 and the refugee referendum of 2016) (Timmer 2017; Bogaards 2017; Pogány 2017).

The problem of representation may constitute a structural *crisis* of political representation; but it also involves the *discursive* issue of naming collective actors, and the diffuse yet pervasive *cultural* pressures of unsatisfied social demands that challenge prevailing political norms. The left-wing grassroots tradition of *Chavismo* in Venezuela stretches the ambivalence of this situation to its limits. On the one hand, in the wake of anti-neoliberal protests of the 1990s and efforts at producing a radical democratic experience with Chávez in the 2000s, participatory grassroots politics implied a politicization of social inequalities with the emergence of commune councils, participatory institutions and social production enterprises between 2006 and 2010 (Ciccariello-Maher 2016). This process facilitated the constitution of 'the people' as a collective actor with unsatisfied demands, canalized outside of and directed against the state apparatuses (Laclau 2006). In this sense, instead of a 'crass populism' (Ellner 2016), popular participation and social policy provided important mechanisms for the empowerment of marginalized sectors and their cultural identity. On the other hand, amid poor economic prospects, the political centrality of the leader and the polarization of the public sphere led this populist rupture to a serious institutional crisis (Corrales 2005; Servigna 2015; Canache 2014).

Arditi (2007, 69) argues that populism is a mode of representation in contemporary media-enhanced politics to the extent that populist leaders are conceived 'as a crossover between acting for others, authorization, and the strong role of imaginary identifications and symbolic imagery.' If leaders claim to speak in the name of the people and to use ordinary language, a dramaturgical dimension of politics underlies this process of naming the people as a collective actor. Populism, thus, implies the performative reference of 'the people,' that is, the theatricality of populist politics (Moffitt and Tormey 2014) and its appeal to social mobilization polarize the public sphere.

For our purposes here, we will take the leap of claiming that 'authoritarian populism' has a specific and a general meaning. Specifically, it was coined by Stuart Hall in his discussions of Thatcherism in Britain in the late 1970s. One of the main theoretical implications of Stuart Hall's (1985) notion of authoritarian populism is how authoritarianism can arise within populist movements through electoral mechanisms of Western democracies. Hall conceives authoritarian populism in the framework of hegemonic politics, which is to say, the way in which popular consent can be orchestrated by a historical block seeking hegemony. In this sense, he tried to understand a new moment in the class democracies based on a new configuration of state control over social life in light of a significant decline of the institutions of political democracy and its representative system. As a kind of *Zeitdiagnose*, Hall was looking to the shift towards Thatcherism in Britain, which implied an understanding of populism as a combination between neo-liberal politics and strong nationalist rhetoric – and the main structure of this concept of authoritarian populism has been somewhat present and has been debated by scholars in recent years in order to grasp Brexit, Trump and the rise of right-wing populism in Western Europe and in the United States (Kellner 2016; Agozino 2016 ; Chacko 2017; Surin 2017).

In more general terms, inclusive of but not subsumed by Hall's use of the term, 'authoritarian populism' refers to authoritarian varieties of populism, or *the sites where populism and authoritarianism connect*. Authoritarian populism is not necessarily reducible to dictatorship or law-and-order regimes. In what follows, we will analyse the connection between populism and authoritarian *slips* in light of structural as well as cultural considerations. At its outer limits, our open frame involves the meeting of ideas from Wallerstein concerning the capitalist world-system and anti-systemic political movements, and Habermas concerning the public sphere and revolts against the colonization of the lifeworld. We emphasize that populism, as a contested concept (which can be understood according to a variety of theoretical paradigms) (Kögl 2010), beyond the variety of empirical forms it may have assumed in left-wing or right-wing parties/movements during the last 60 years (March 2017), can be discussed in light of the analytical core suggested by Francisco Panizza (2005), which is to say, a mode of identification (polarization and social antagonism), a process of naming ('the people' and the anti-people) and a dimension of politics (symbolic system).

The question should be asked: 'When is populism specifically 'authoritarian populism' as opposed to simply being populism?' To answer this question requires that 'authoritarian' be given a coherent definition. The definition we will use here, which we consider to be broadly equivalent with Hall's employment of the term, is the following: to be 'authoritarian' is to use coercion (which can be legal, physical, psychological, and so on) to eliminate or otherwise subdue difference. In other words, to be authoritarian is to seek homogenization by force. Using this definition, it is clear that the label 'authoritarian' is somewhat up to interpretation, marking a judgment along a continuum. How *much* force is authoritarian? However, we may consider a social movement to be authoritarian if it supports the *increased* use of coercion to counter social difference.

In the sense that authoritarian and populist revolt both involve the use of force; they are two sides of the same coin. Both express militancy and will-to-power on the part of a portion of the population against another portion of the population. Both aim to realize their goals against the will of their opposition, hence to control difference, at most to achieve hegemony, at least to quiet differing opinions and oust their containing persons from monopolizing the reins of power. We might distinguish militancy as 'authoritarian' by the defense of already-existent power, whether perceived to be under threat or recently eroded. This could mean the militant action of a majority against encroaching minorities, or of a minority against a threatening majority. However, a minority can only have such already-existent power in a formal sense (holding political office and commanding social including military resources). A majority might have power in the aforementioned formal sense, but also might have power just by virtue of being the majority, having a dominating cultural legacy in a given region, and so on.

In light of the forgoing, the main difference between authoritarianism and non-authoritarian revolt is: in the latter the militant agency is an oppressed group looking to overturn hitherto dominant power, whereas in the former the militant agency is already in power, and looks to maintain, solidify, or extend that power. However, the force of revolution is at least prone to moving in an authoritarian direction. As in Weber's diagnosis of the inevitable ossification and perversion of charismatic authority upon its triumph, so 'revolution from below' in inherently prone to transform into 'revolution from above' once the revolutionaries gain the reigns of control. And even if overt force is not required, the war remains, if in latent form, politics perhaps being really 'war by other means' (Foucault 2003). It is imaginable that even the cruellest dictators may narrate themselves as acting for the common good, just as the genocide of subpopulations may be enacted on the grounds of aiming to protect the larger society.

Authoritarianism *per se* is not a left-wing or right-wing phenomenon. And yet here we will go out on a proverbial limb and suggest the distinction: right-wing populism is authoritarian *by definition*, whereas left-wing populism may or may not be authoritarian. To put it differently, right-wing populism is

authoritarian on the surface, whereas left-wing populism may turn to authoritarianism behind its own back, or by default, etc. The reason for this is that – if we use Müller's distinction between left-wing and right-wing populism – right-wing populism is about the defense and fortification of a class already occupying a position of relative privilege in society, whereas left-wing populism is not. When militancy is aroused to protect a privileged class against – at least partially – an underprivileged class, it is by our definition authoritarian.

7.2. Public Sphere and Lifeworld Colonization

Habermas (1962/1992) identifies the public sphere as a distinct realm of society from the private sphere, the market and the state. Through media and in-person forums of public life that facilitate the rational exchange of ideas unencumbered by state control or market forces, people are drawn together to bring their private understandings into a dialogic and transformative social arena. Importantly, this arena is positioned as a countervailing power to state control, compelling the state to be genuinely responsive to and reflective of public sentiment. The public sphere is thus a democratizing force.

Decades later, Habermas (1987) describes the historically growing rift between lifeworld (crudely put: personal experience and local culture) and system (crudely put: abstract, formal structures of society). As the system increasingly alienates from the lifeworld, it also becomes prone to dominating the lifeworld, 'colonizing' it with its own rationality. Habermas posits the positive potential for resistance to the colonization of the lifeworld in the ability for pockets of the lifeworld to maintain their integrity somehow within a system-dominated macrostructure. This requires intentional buttressing of the lifeworld from systems-rational forces. Exactly how this might play out in a palpable or at least structural sense is beyond the scope of Habermas' theory. His focus is on rationality, and while his theory may infer necessary structural parameters, he does not say what they might be, or how they might arise; only that the colonization of the lifeworld is often decried by people during transitionary periods. But he does portray a needed development where the lifeworld has traction against systems forces, through the fortifying of organic pockets of rational, democratic will-formation, and similar to the public sphere as unencumbered by outside and alien macro-forces.

Unfortunately, resistance to lifeworld colonization can easily take 'regressive' conservative forms. Revolts against the growing power of systems-rationality vis-à-vis the lifeworld may constitute progressive 'new social movements' (Habermas 1981) but often they come instead with authoritarian outcries for defense of tradition. Habermas is clear that preserving the dogmas of the past against rationality *per se* is different from fortifying the opportunities for organic and democratic will-formation against the rationality born of systems imperatives. And it is the latter that he views as a way forward. The former he

associates with fascist movements and like forms of destructive public reaction; in other words right-wing populism.

Calhoun (1988) identifies populism as a response to the separation of system and lifeworld, although he reframes them both – not just the lifeworld – to be within human experience. In other words, the 'system world' is something perceived and understood by people, not ontologically distinct from the life-world. The difference between system world and lifeworld is the alien and rei-fied character of system world experience. The key movement in the separation of the worlds is that people experience a growing separation between the logic of what appear to be abstract, removed, calculating, objective institutions of control, and the logic of the organic, personal, and locally relevant lifeworld. When articulated in political terms, 'regular people' experience alienation from government, and they understand political elites as legislating according to different logics from their own.

Building from Calhoun, we propose that the separation of system world from lifeworld might be viewed as one of several non-deterministic *preconditions* for populist movements. By 'preconditions,' we do not mean that they are necessary for the instigation of populist sentiment and revolt, or that they always inspire populism. Rather, we suggest that they may help 'set the stage' in various empirical contexts, fertilizing amenable ground upon which the performance of populism can thrive. Whether a society under such preconditions generates a populist movement, and to what extent the populist movement takes an authoritarian direction, are questions that must be approached with an historian's eye for particularity. Whether a charismatic leader arises and whether identity narratives and their tensions are strong enough to inspire revolt by a subgroup self-identifying as 'the people' cannot be answered through predictions based on structural preconditions. However, the theoretical analysis of preconditions may be useful in understanding what structural conditions may be particularly vulnerable to populism and its authoritarian varieties. In Habermasian terms, we suggest that in addition to the alienation of system/life worlds, problems of the public sphere may be another precondition. We propose two such problems: a) population sub-groups are excluded from access to and representation in the public sphere, and b) the state acts without recourse to 'public opinion' ('public' defined as those granted access to participation in the public sphere). For the sake of brevity, in the remainder of this chapter we refer to these preconditions as 'status-group exclusion' and 'general exclusion,' respectively.

Regarding urbanization in Habermasian terms, the advent of urban centres is favourable to the growth of the public sphere – which, when functioning at its best, is stabilizing for democracy. As long as the public sphere that thrives with urbanization is given political representation, popular unrest is less likely at least among those included in the public sphere. However, the advent of the public sphere makes the society more susceptible to mass mobilization in the case that general exclusion – lack of political representation for those given

voice in the public sphere – takes shape. The formation of the public will must be accompanied by the sense of belongingness and collective experiences and interests. Hence, conditions in the urban public sphere favour the development of the imaginary of 'the people.' On the flipside, if rapid modernization and urbanization take place within a previously traditional rural society, a sense of 'the people' may arise among those still living in – or attempting to hold on to – the traditional rural culture. Indeed, there can be multiple enclaves claiming to be 'the people' within the same national boundaries. Whichever way, modernization is not neutral regarding susceptibility to populist sentiments: it is an agitator and instigator. A collective imaginary finds fertile ground, and the question of political representation becomes a crux of social stability – under democratic conditions, stability; under conditions of general exclusion, vulnerability to populist revolt.

Regarding rationalization, modernization involves a growth in the complexity of formal, rational systems for the administration of society, as well as the increasing alienation of those systems from local organic cultures (the lifeworld). Coupled with the institutionalization of rational law over traditional authority, modernized societies face the need to justify their existence. Formally or informally, popular consent is required for modernized societies to continue without revolt. The authority of office no longer suffices so the authority of reason has to be maintained through ostensibly rational argument. 'The people' require that the system come along with justification, otherwise there is a crisis of legitimation, which is prone to lead to social movements, including populist ones. Rapidly modernizing societies are especially unstable in this regard. Rapid modernization comes with the anomic destruction or transformation of traditional ways of life under systemic forces, only to supply instead rationalized steering mechanisms without local history or cultural grounding, or the internal colonization of the lifeworld. And this rapid colonization brings with it a vulnerability to resistance in the form of populist revolt (Habermas 1975, 1984, 1987).

Yet for Habermas, rationalization also has the positive connotation of *rational deliberation* and public will-formation. Indeed, rationalization is also an historical prerequisite for the flourishing of 'communicative action' – or authentic and congruent communication geared toward rational deliberation and mutual understanding – in the political realm (Habermas 1984, 1987). In different but still Habermasian terms, rational and free deliberation is the medium of public will-formation in a functional public sphere; which secures the salience of responsive democratic political institutions (Habermas 1962/1992). To the extent that communicative action is integral to meaningful democracy, it is also specifically non-authoritarian. Hence we might supplement our earlier definition of authoritarianism – as coercion directed against difference – with one specific to communication, taking the liberty of extending Habermas' typology: *authoritarian action*, or coercive action aimed at silencing or eliminating difference, is directly opposed to communicative action (and vice versa).

Habermas' theory is helpful, yet limited due to its overall generality, which some have identified as Eurocentric (Allen 2016). From a Marxist perspective, another problem with Habermas is that his theory ignores political economy, and social inequalities generally (Thompson 2016). Whether or not Habermas is deserving of vitriol is not our concern. However, we are in agreement with his critics that his theory leaves out a dedicated consideration of power, notably in terms of transnational dynamics and social inequalities such as race, class and gender. Our approach in this paper is, rather than tossing out Habermas, 'bringing the Marx back in.' Regarding transnational dynamics and class inequalities, we propose Wallerstein's world-systems analysis a fruitful complement to Habermas' lifeworld/system and public sphere theories. Other complements (such as focus on race and gender) would also prove useful, but it is not our purpose here to cover everything, nor to propose yet another theory with pretensions of totalization. Instead, we hope to highlight a platform for the cross-fertilization and integration of some world-systems and Habermasian concepts, in application to populism in general and semi-peripheral and peripheral regions in particular. In the following sections, we outline Wallerstein's world-systems analysis, and propose some preliminary points of integration using examples from peripheral and semi-peripheral regions in Latin America.

7.3. Peripheries and Semi-Peripheries within the Modern World-System

In this section, we discuss the unequal development of capitalist integration of world-economy in the light of world-system categories (especially Wallerstein's main concepts). We think that Wallerstein's world-systems perspective is useful for understanding the anatomy of twentieth century populist movements in peripheral regions, as well as their contexts of appearance. These populisms were formed in the wake of modernization efforts at the margins of the capitalist world-system, and this influences the anatomy of the populist movements that emerged. However, after entering this debate (to which our last section will be devoted), it is important to take into account the general structure of Wallerstein's approach.

As a mode and as a conceptual apparatus of analysing macro-sociological and historical processes (Mielants 2017), Wallerstein's world-systems theory can be analysed in light of a double axis: a *structural* position of its elements within an integrated system (nations, regions, etc.), and a historical *dynamics* concerning the constitution of this system. Together, these two dimensions constitute a *structural dynamism* of the world-system. According to the methodological focus of this paper, we will not discuss in depth the whole historical constitution of world-system covering the period running from the medieval prelude to the complete development of capitalist structures in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (as it is expressed in Wallerstein's first three volumes of his ambitious

The Modern World-System). What interests us most in this chapter is that, for Wallerstein, the *modern* world-system is a *capitalist* world-system. And this statement has important theoretical implications for our approach.

The sixteenth century marks the great turning point towards the constitution of a capitalist *world*-system. From that period onwards, with the incorporation of colonial zones in the Americas, Africa and Asia, capitalist expansion subordinated them and held them tightly within an *integrated system* (Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein 1989, 54) – integrated, but not equal or undifferentiated. In this sense, as an uneven and combined development based on unequal material exchanges (Wallerstein 2004, 12), market structure plays an important role in the constitution of the world-system. Since the market is not seen as enclosed within each nation-state, but rather as a unitary world market (Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein 1989, 6), socio-economic integration is grounded in three main axes (division of labor, profit, and commodity exchange), which implies a dynamic arrangement of nation-states according to their structural positions within the world-system and its endless accumulation of capital (Wallerstein 1993, 90–91). For Wallerstein, that is why it makes no sense to speak of an articulation of modes of production (like Harold Wolpe, Barry Hindess, Paul Hirst, Jacob Gorender and others do), since the world-system's units (nations, regions, states, and so on) interrelate in a comprehensive structure.

In this sense, 'core,' 'periphery' and 'semi-periphery' are relational categories identifying the structural position of regions/countries within the modern world-system. According to Wallerstein (2004, 28), since the axial division of labor implies both the profitability of production and the position of core, peripheral and semi-peripheral regions (which is to say, historical capitalism was built on the basic capital-labor principle), the societal transformation of production (e. g. industrialization, urbanization, etc.) entails a change in the structural position of each region/country. The constitution of the modern world-system, thus, tended to produce commodity chains based on territorial differentiation *internal* to the system itself (Wallerstein 1993, 30). This hierarchization of space and the functional integration of the elements according to their specialization (colonial areas and agricultural goods, core areas and manufactured goods and so on) structured relational positions to the extent that they represented unequal processes of the accumulation of capital and, above all, the conditions of change within global capitalism.

The above-mentioned structural dynamism of world-systems theory is particularly important in this sense: 'core,' 'periphery' and 'semi-periphery,' instead of ontologically prior existents, are moments in the historical process of the transforming world-system according to its material dynamics. The fluctuant historical character of this structure points to the possibility of non-teleological structural rearrangements, as opposed to the Eurocentric supposition that the prior paths of core societies are the predetermined paths of peripheral transformations (and that is the focus of Wallerstein's main critiques on the modernization theories of the 1950s and 1960s and some of the Latin American

dependentistas). Rather, historical transformations occur when one of the main axes (division of labor, profit, and commodities exchange) produces a functional reorientation that impacts the structural position of each country/region within the system.

7.4. Synthesis and Preliminary Example Application

Much as with Habermas, Wallerstein's theory does not offer a direct and sustained treatment of populism. But the main components of his world-systems analysis can provide a theoretical scheme that provides the anatomy and structural entanglement between modernizing moves (Domingues 2009) and the problem of populism in (semi)peripheral areas. We suggest that, concerning populism, Habermas' theories benefit from incorporating world-systems insights. The rise of populism in peripheral regions transitioning into semi-peripheral positions within the modern world-system can be analysed in light of this general framework.

One important example is the structural transformation of Latin America between the 1930s and the 1960s in the light of what Wallerstein (2000) called the chaotic transition within world-system structures. In the region, especially in countries like Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Chile and Venezuela, urbanization increased alongside a model of industrial growth grounded in import substitution industrialization. This conjuncture was marked by a double transformation of a former colonial area. On the one hand, instead of raw materials and agro-export goods, industrialization illustrated an attempt at suppressing the colonial economy in order to stimulate a differentiated system (urban services and heavy industrialization) that promoted a new integration of the region into modern capitalism and its axial division of labour (Halperin Donghi 2013; Almandoz, 2008; Baer 1972). On the other hand, in the wake of this new position of an emerging industrial region within the structural division of labour, city life and demographic pressure expanded notably in that conjuncture (Potter and Lloyd-Evans 2014; Lattes 1995).

Accelerated industrialization and urbanization favoured the development of representative governance, involving mass mobilization and the structural integration of urban actors into class society (Germani 1973, 18). Beyond rhetoric and political demagogy, populism was thus the political expression of new forms of social integration in peripheral regions undergoing material transformations within the world-system context. Alongside the material aspects of the transition of a peripheral region from an oligarchic political system towards an urban society, the ideological realm of a massified public sphere structured a new form of hegemony grounded in an anti-establishment mobilization that, although incarnated in the figure of the leader, counted on the proactivity of the new multitude (Debert 2008).

The incorporation of urban actors into the public sphere encompassed a larger base of representation. In a context of representative politics, as Wallerstein (2004, 51–52) argues, 'the people' carries ambivalence as a concept of both inclusion and exclusion. In light of deep social transformation – especially in the classical cases of Vargas (Brazil) and Perón (Argentina) – the new urban actors played an important role in the legitimation of the regimes and the constitution of the political as a sphere of claim and dispute of the content of this singular collective ('the people') (Demier 2013; Finchelstein 2017). To the extent that the ideological effort to give a voice to those who are outside political representation (and here the polarization between insiders/outsiders is crucial) do not grasp pluralist tendencies among 'the people,' 'the danger is the creation of an image of the People as One' (De la Torre 2013).

In Latin America, between the 1930s and the 1960s, industrialization and urbanization promoted new forms of social integration that presented the political dilemma of the popular participation of the urban masses (O'Donnell 1993; O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). The new configuration of the public sphere based on the modern press industry (*Pressegewerbe*) and communication structures (Habermas 1990, 282) promoted ideological efforts at unifying new social actors into a multitude or one 'popular will' (Capelato 2009). In this sense, mass politics and the populist incorporation of urban masses in the context of structural change in peripheral areas promoted a kind of politicization of social spaces (streets, cafes etc.): José Maria Velasco Ibarra, president of Ecuador, on five occasions between the 1930s and the 1970s illustrates this situation by constructing 'the people' as a singular political will through the political appropriation of the public sphere and turning his rivals into 'moral enemies' (De la Torre 1994, 229).

As a political practice directed towards collective affections and the public imaginary, populism emerges not solely through the modernization of structures, but also from the strong presence of symbols and collective appeals within the public sphere (Álvarez Junco 1994), turning on the separation of system world from lifeworld and the alienation of 'regular people' from institutional politics; a kind of ideological substratum upon which populist mobilization can build, with its polarized representations of 'the people' and the 'anti-people,' the establishment and the anti-establishment, and so on. Wallerstein (2004) notes that semi-peripheral nations may be especially prone to typically nationalist measures, which is likely to be accompanied with nationalist ideology in the case of a social movement: Vargas, who was the president of Brazil in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, led this kind of populist mobilization with a strong nationalist rhetoric (Lima 1990) grounded in the invention of the national roots of 'the people.' With the populist mobilization of José Eliécer Gaitán in Colombia between 1945 and 1948, the ideological fusion of the masses under the leader's will fuelled a strong convulsion in the political system (Chaouch 2009). In this case, the anti-establishment rhetoric was

grounded in hostilities against the organized worker's movement and trade unions like the Confederation of Workers of Colombia (CTC) and the Union of Workers of Colombia (UTC) (Pécaut 2000). The discourse against the degenerated (oligarchic) political system was also a populist attempt at (re)enacting a homogeneous political will. While opposing a regenerated 'people' to a corrupted 'elite' (the oligarchy), the movement also produced an ideological unification in the fragmented nation.

7.5.   Future Directions

In this chapter, we proposed a general theoretical framework concerning populism and its authoritarian varieties in order to expand the analysis of authoritarian populism beyond the present situation in contemporary Western democracies in Europe and the United States. From a global perspective, populism constitutes a multidimensional phenomenon. Populisms of the (semi) periphery in the twentieth century can be traced back to modernizing moves and associated structural transformations of the regions, integrally in interaction with their locations in global divisions of labor and power. Latin America is a typical example of this situation. Our main effort, thus, consisted in bringing the rise of the twentieth century industrial world (urban life, urban masses, and so on) and the challenges of the public sphere together to understand the problem of populism in (semi)peripheral countries. We highlighted some important cases of populism and authoritarian slips in Latin America (Vargas in Brazil, Perón in Argentina, contemporary Venezuela, and so on).

We maintain that accelerated capitalist change produces major impacts on communicative structures – and populism can be conceived in the light of these developments. At the margins, thus, populism and its authoritarian slips have strong roots in the context of capitalist transformations of the lifeworld. We might speak of a dialectic of populism, its crux lying in the new subjectivities that emerge from capitalist circuits. With the rise of urban publics, new poles of reference favour dichotomous ideological narratives of societal integration (the people, the nation, and so on). The present situation within the modern world-system stretches this general framework to the very institutional limits of liberal democracies, illustrating the articulation of ultra-nationalism and right-wing populism into a broad transnational movement that may be headed towards autocratic forms of rule.

In the above paragraphs we have lightly scratched the surface of what might be done with the open framework that we have suggested. As mentioned early in the paper, the terrain is vast and complex. Unfortunately this means that in the space of approximately 7,500 words we can only introduce the barest shadow of what might be done. Fortunately this means there is a lot further that such analytical scheme could go. In the theoretical frame we did not even touch upon the overlap between populist movements and 'antisystemic movements'

(Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein 1989). Nor did we satisfactorily address the question of competing ascriptions of 'the people' in urban vis-à-vis rural society during rapid modernization, or even just the existence of 'counterpublics' in general (Warner 2002). We only briefly mentioned – and only on theoretical ground rather than in case examples – the negative relationship of Habermas' notion of communicative action with action oriented towards authoritarian ends. The list goes on. We did not delve in depth via extended case studies into the varied history of populist movements throughout the various regions of Latin America, to apply these theories in careful and nuanced fashion. If there is one 'takeaway' we can offer it is that we suggest future work should be done on bits and pieces of what we have just gestured towards in the constellation thrown onto these pages.

Notes

¹ A strong tradition of Latin American studies also deals with this contested concept (Aggio 2003; López 2004; Aldao 2013).
² See also Habermas (1973).
³ For another example see Morelock (2016).
⁴ The sense of a *crisis* of representation is more likely an issue for classes used to being represented, perhaps more a 'middle class' than a 'lower class' issue. We suggest it is likewise perhaps a right-wing more than a left-wing issue; and that the beginning of representation for previously excluded subpopulations is more likely (but not necessarily) a left-wing issue.

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Digital Authoritarianism

CHAPTER 8

Racism, Nationalism and Right-Wing Extremism Online: The Austrian Presidential Election 2016 on Facebook

Christian Fuchs

8.1. Introduction

Norbert Hofer was the Freedom Party of Austria's (FPÖ) candidate in the 2016 Austrian presidential election. In the first round, he achieved 35.05% of the cast votes and became the strongest candidate. The second round took place on May 23 and saw a run-off between Hofer and Alexander Van der Bellen. Hofer's share of the vote was 49.64%. Van der Bellen, who was the leader of Austria's Green Party leader from 1997 until 2008, won with a voting share of 50.35% in the second round and a lead of just a bit more than 30,000 votes. The Austrian presidential election received lots of international interest and people were asking themselves how it was possible that a far-right candidate achieved almost half of the vote. The FPÖ filed a complaint to the Constitutional Court of Austria that resulted in a re-run of the run-off.

This chapter asks: how did voters of Hofer express their support on Facebook? It applies critical discourse analysis to data collected from postings on two public Facebook pages (Norbert Hofer, Heinz-Christian Strache). The analysis situates Hofer supporters' ideological discourse in Austria's political context and history.

Section 2 engages with theoretical foundations by discussing the notion of ideology. Section 3 focuses on the theoretical clarification of nationalist and new racist ideology. Section 4 provides an overview of the Freedom Party's ideology. Section 5 explains the methodology. Section 6 presents the analysis and interpretation. Section 7 draws some conclusions.

8.2.   Theoretical Foundations: What is Ideology?

This work studies online nationalism and online xenophobia. It is a contribution to empirical ideology critique. An underlying theoretical question that arises in this context is how one should best understand the notion of ideology. There are different traditions of how to define and study ideology. Approaches include for example Marx's theory of commodity fetishism, Lukács' theory of reification, Gramsci's theory of hegemony, the Frankfurt School, Hallian Cultural Studies, various forms and schools of Critical Discourse Analysis, Foucauldian discourse analysis, Althusserian ideology theory, and so on (Eagleton 1991, Rehmann 2013, Žižek 1994). These theories do not have a consensus on what ideology is and how it should be defined. Two major schools in the critical study of ideology go back to Antonio Gramsci and Georg Lukács.

Whereas Gramsci's approach can be characterized as ideology theory, the one by Lukács can be seen as ideology critique (Fuchs 2015, chapter 3). Gramsci understands ideology as worldviews, the 'superstructure of a particular structure' (Gramsci 1988, 199) and a 'conception of the world' (Gramsci 1988, 343). Lukács' approach, based on Marx's theory of commodity fetishism, sees ideology as reified thought emerging in reified societies. He therefore argues that the 'emergence and diffusion of ideologies appears as the general characteristic of class societies' (Lukács 1986, 405).

Terry Eagleton (1991, chapter 1) discerns various understandings of ideology by identifying six theoretical approaches:

1. Ideology as the 'production of ideas, beliefs and values in social life' (28) (=ideology as culture);
2. Ideas and beliefs of 'a specific, socially significant group or class' (29) (=ideology as worldview);
3. The '*promotion* and *legitimation* of the interests' of a group 'in the face of opposing interests' (29);

4. The 'promotion and legitimation of sectoral interests' in the 'activities of a dominant social power' (29) (=ideology as dominant worldviews);

5. '[I]deas and beliefs which help to legitimate the interests of a ruling group or class specifically by distortion and dissimulation' (30);

6. '[F]alse or deceptive beliefs […] arising not from the interests of a dominant class but from the material structure of society as a whole' (30).

Marx, Lukács and the Frankfurt School have especially influenced the theoretical concept of ideology used in this article and the Marxian theoretical approach that underlies it (Fuchs 2015, Fuchs 2016b, 2016c, 2018a). The notion of ideology employed relates to Eagleton's fifth and sixth meanings of ideology. By ideology, I understand thoughts, practices, ideas, words, concepts, phrases, sentences, texts, belief systems, meanings, representations, artefacts, institutions, systems or combinations thereof that represent and justify one group's or individual's power, domination or exploitation of other groups or individuals by misrepresenting, one-dimensionally presenting or distorting reality in symbolic representations (Fuchs 2015). Ideology is not simply an abstract structure, but has a concrete, lived reality: Ideological workers produce and reproduce ideologies (Fuchs 2015, chapter 3). Marx characterizes the producers of ideology as 'the thinkers of the [ruling] class', its 'active, conceptive ideologists', who – based on a division of labour within the ruling class – 'make the formation of the illusions of the class about itself their chief source of livelihood' (Marx and Engels 1845, 68).

The definition taken in the theoretical approach underlying this work implies moral realism and socialist praxis: Humans can analyse and understand the world's reality and complex problems' real causes. Ideology critique is the deconstruction of falsehood, of knowledge that is presented as truth, but is deceptive. Socialist moral realism implies that dominative and exploitative societies negate humans' general interests. From a political point of view, they therefore should be abolished and replaced by a societal formation that benefits all economically, socially, politically and culturally. Such a society of the commons is a socialist society. Eagleton's fifth and sixth meanings of ideology are based on a dialectical contradiction of class societies and socialism. These are critical-political understandings that imply political praxis and the transcendence of class, capitalism and domination.

Not everyone agrees with such a definition of ideology. Theories of ideology generally disagree. For Louis Althusser (2005), ideology is an '*organic part of every social totality*' (232). 'Ideology is a system (with its own logic and rigour) of representations (images, myths, ideas or concepts, depending on the case) endowed with a historical existence and role within a given society' (231). Althusserian ideology theory has been influential.

Stuart Hall (1986/1996, 26) defines ideology as 'the mental frameworks – the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representations – which different classes and social groups deploy in order to

make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works'. Hall (1982) identifies the critical paradigm in media studies with the study of ideology. The origin would have been the Frankfurt School's challenge of behaviourist media effects research. Hall's notion of ideology is grounded in structural linguistics and the works of Gramsci, Althusser and Laclau.

The problems of Hall's understanding are twofold. First, humans are denied subject positions. Discourse and ideological structures are turned into a subject. Such structuralism becomes evident when structures are presented as actively doing something and humans are seen as structure's objects. Hall for example writes that each person is positioned and languaged (80), ideological discourses win their way (80), and discourse speaks itself through him/her (88). It is then not humans who communicate ideology and discourse through language, but rather it is ideology that languages, speaks, communicates, and so on. In this approach, ideology is an articulation of linguistic elements, of rules, codes, linguistic systems, classificatory systems, matrixes, and sets of elements. Missing is the insight that ideology is an active communicative process and a social relation, in which humans, groups and classes produce and reproduce power relations. Production and reproduction of power entails possibilities to undo, perturb, challenge, and oppose existing power relations just like it entails possibilities to take over, justify, sustain, and legitimate such relations.

The second problem is associated with the first: in a structuralist approach, social struggle becomes a struggle between ideologies. It is not seen as a power relation between humans, in which they actively produce and reproduce discourses and ideologies. It is not ideologies that struggle with each other, but humans, human groups and classes who struggle against each other with various means, including the means of communication, and with specific capacities to mobilize power. Such resources in ideological and other struggles have specific distributions that enable various degrees of power. Hall's approach is a relativistic determinism, in which ideological struggles and alternative interpretations emerge with necessity. He therefore speaks of ideology as a 'site of struggle' (between competing definitions) (70) and of significations as 'controversial and conflicting' (70). There is certainly always the possibility for contestation, but no necessity for it. Asymmetric power relations can equip humans, groups and classes to different degrees with capacities to speak, communicate, be heard, visible and listened to, and to get information across to others.

General understandings of ideology represent the first and second meanings identified by Eagleton. The problem is that such a generalist understanding is morally and politically relativist. If the views that 'Jews are inferior beings, that women are less rational than men, that fornicators will be condemned to perpetual torment' are 'not instances of false consciousness, then it is difficult to know what is; and those who dismiss the whole notion of false consciousness must be careful not to appear cavalier about the offensiveness of these opinions' (Eagleton 1991, 15). If democratic socialism and anti-fascism are the

dominant paradigms in a society, then in such a societal context, fascism, racism and capitalism are in a general understanding of ideology forms of ideology critique. Such a generality is a disservice for a critical theory of society. Max Horkheimer (1972, 28) remarks in this respect about Karl Mannheim's general theory of ideology that such general approaches 'thoroughly purge from the ideology concept the remains of its accusatory meaning'. According to Adorno (1981, 38), generalising theories of ideology employ 'the terminology of social criticism while removing its sting'. Whereas the critique of ideology is 'determinate negation in the Hegelian sense, the confrontation of the ideational with its realization' (Adorno 1972, 466), general theories of ideology replace the determinate negation by the analysis of 'general worldviews' (Adorno 1972, 472).

Eagleton's fifth and sixth definition do not imply, as claimed by Stuart Hall (1986/1996, 30), 'economic and class reductionism'. In the theory of false consciousness and false society, class background and position do not determine, but condition consciousness. A dominant class is often organized in competing class factions that also have competing ideologies. The example of Marx and Engels, who came from quite bourgeois families, shows that individuals are not trapped in certain ideologies because of their background. Consciousness is dynamic and reflects in complex non-linear ways the total of an individual's experiences, social positions and social relations in society.

Also, in the tradition of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), there are different understandings of ideology. Norman Fairclough (2010, 73) distinguishes between critical and descriptive concepts of ideology. Teun van Dijk (1998, 8) has a more descriptive approach and defines ideology as a mental framework that is 'the *basis of the social representations shared by members of a group*' that allows the organisation of the group members' social beliefs and practices. In contrast to van Dijk, Fairclough defines ideology as 'representations which contribute to the constitution, reproduction, and transformation of social relations of power and domination' (Fairclough 2010, 73). His understanding is close to the fourth, fifth and sixth meanings of ideology identified by Eagleton. Reisigl and Wodak (2009, 88) understand ideology as a 'one-sided perspective or world view' of a particular social group that is a means for 'establishing and maintaining unequal power relations through discourse'. Wodak explicitly acknowledges the influence of Frankfurt School Critical Theory on the discourse-historical approach of CDA (Wodak 2009, 34–35; Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 32).

Theodor W. Adorno's works show ideology critique in action. The dominant tendency is to reduce Adorno to the critique of the culture industry (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002, 94–136; for a discussion and critique of this tendency, see: Fuchs 2016b, chapter 3). Such readings overlook the wealth of Adorno's ideology critique that includes also for example studies of the ideology of anti-Semitism (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002, 137–172), fascist and authoritarian ideology (Adorno 1955, 1973), ideologies in everyday life (Adorno 1951), astrology, superstition and occultism (Adorno 1955, 1962), ideology and

its critique in education (Adorno 1971), and so on. Adorno understands ideology in a *Lukácsian sense* as 'a consciousness which is objectively necessary and yet at the same time false, as the intertwining of truth and falsehood' (Adorno 1954, 189). For Adorno (1954, 190), the need for ideology critique follows from the existence of ideology. The understanding of ideology underlying this article stands in the tradition of Marx, Lukács and the Frankfurt School. Based on the Frankfurt School tradition, Jürgen Ritsert (1972) has defined empirical ideology critique as a method of critical social research.

8.3. Nationalism and New Racism

Through ideologies, humans, groups and classes try to persuade, influence, reify, hide, distort, promote, legitimate, deceive, misrepresent, or justify dominative interests. Karl Marx (1867, section 1.4) saw capitalism's structure as inherently fetishistic: the commodity form hides the social character of capitalism behind things. Fetishism is not just an economic phenomenon, but it can be found in class societies in peculiar ways in the realms of politics and ideology. Ideology tries to naturalize domination by hiding its social and historical character and dissimulating attention from the power relations underlying heteronomous societies. An example is the construction of an ideology that claims that 'we' national citizens are all together facing society's problems (unemployment, poverty, crime, precariousness, crises, lack of adequate housing, welfare, education, health care, and so on), that 'we' have these problems because of foreign influences, and we can as a nation fight these dark forces. The ideological trick in such arguments is to disguise that 'we' are not a unitary subject in a class society, but we have different positions and capacities in power relations. Nationalism is a particular form of ideology.

It was Rosa Luxemburg (1976), who first used Marx's notion of fetishism as a political concept to question the fetishistic character of the nation and nationalism. She argues that nationalist ideology 'ignores completely the fundamental theory of modern socialism – the theory of social classes' (135). Nationalism is a 'misty veil' that 'conceals in every case a definite historical content' (135). 'In a class society, "the nation'" as a homogeneous socio-political entity does not exist. Rather, there exist within each nation, classes with antagonistic interests and "rights'" (135). Nationalism is an ideology that in a particular manner veils and distracts attention from society's class relations and the role they play in society's problems.

Some common elements of Marxist theories and understandings of nationalism are the following ones[1] (compare: Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, Hall 1993, Hobsbawm 1992, Luxemburg 1976, Özkirimli 2010):

- *Ideology:* Nationalism is an ideology that constructs an Us/Them difference, in which the in-group is conceived as a unitary, homogeneous collective

defined either by common claims to biology, genealogy, kinship and family ('race') or by claims to a common culture (commonality of language, communication, upbringing, moral values, traditions, customs, law, religion, emotions, experiences, identity, means of communication), a common state/political system/constitution or a common economy. Nationalism as ideology makes claims to territorial power for organising a national economic and a national political system. Nationalism constructs/invents/fabricates the nation and fictive national identity. Nationalist identity stresses fixity and homogeneity, whereas in reality all societies are complex, hybrid and diverse.

- *Dialectic of racism/xenophobia and nationalism*: Racism/xenophobia and nationalism are inherently linked. Xenophobia is an ideological construction of the out-group that is not part of the illusionary national collective.
- *Political fetishism*: Nationalism, xenophobia and racism are a form of political fetishism that ideologically distracts from how society's class antagonisms bring about social problems. The distraction from and veiling of class are often achieved by the construction of scapegoats and by steering hatred against them.
- *Forms of nationalism*: Nationalism, xenophobia and racism can be directed against an inner enemy (migrants, minorities) or an outer enemy (other nations, foreign groups). One can draw a distinction between sociological and institutional racism/nationalism and between inclusive (exploitative) and exclusive (exterminatory) racism/nationalism. Furthermore, there are biological and cultural forms of racism/nationalism.
- *Militarism*: Nationalism is associated with internal militarism (repression and law-and-order politics directed against immigrants and minorities) and external militarism (imperialist warfare).

Whereas nationalism constitutes an inward-oriented ideology constructing the identity of an invented political and cultural collective, racism and xenophobia define the outside of this collective, those who are considered not to be part of the nation, the nation's outsiders, foreign elements, or enemies. Racism is '*a supplement internal to nationalism*' (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, 54). 'Racism is constantly emerging out of nationalism […] And nationalism emerges out of racism' (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, 53). Classical nationalism often constructed the outsider in biological terms as a 'race', whereas today it has become more common to define the outsider in cultural and political terms. Whereas some observers therefore like to distinguish between racism and xenophobia, Étienne Balibar has coined the notion of the new racism to describe ideological continuities and parallels:

> The new racism is a racism of the era of 'decolonization' […] [It] fits into the framework of 'racism without races' […] It is a racism whose dominant theme is not biological heredity but the insurmountability of

> cultural differences, a racism which, at first sight, does not postulate the
> superiority of certain groups or peoples in relation to others but 'only'
> the harmfulness of abolishing frontiers, the incompatibility of life-styles
> and traditions; in short, it is what P. A. Taguieff has rightly called a *differentialist racism*. (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, 21)

Pierre-André Taguieff, to whom Balibar refers, argues that racism is ideologically naturalising differences, 'either by scientistic biologization or by ethnicization or "culturalist" fixing' (Taguieff 2001, 200). He distinguishes between two basic types of racism. Racism type 1 biologizes differences and argues that one postulated 'race' is superior to another and that such differences are natural and eternal. Racism type 2 culturalizes and celebrates differences. It concludes that specific cultures should therefore not mix. 'Naturalization is therefore either *biologizing* or *culturalist'* (207). Both versions draw comparable political conclusions that include the erection and defence closure of borders, ending migration, and the opposition to multiculturalism: 'Irreducible, incomparable, and unassimilable, the human types that differ (the reasons for difference are infinite), moreover, may not communicate with each other, neither de facto nor de jure. The impossibility of a human community beyond the enclosures is the ultimate conclusion of the thesis of *incommunicability.* Hence the violent denunciations of 'cosmopolitanism' or 'globalism,' processes and ideals that are supposed to destroy singular and closed communities, and, more profoundly and less distinctly, their 'identity'". (204). Taguieff's key insight, on which Balibar builds, is that there are biologistic and culturalist versions of racism.

Banks and Gingrich (2006, 2) use the term neo-nationalism for the 're-emergence of nationalism under different global and transnational conditions'. Parliamentary neo-nationalists in Europe tend to be opposed to immigration and the EU and to argue for differentialist racism. They embrace strong leadership and cultural populism. Much –

> neo-nationalist rhetoric is sufficiently pragmatic to accept that blood-based homogeneity can never define the boundaries of the national, let
> alone the state, and seeks instead to generate an argument based upon
> historical association […] 'cultural fundamentalism' […] has often
> come to replace race in the discourse of neo-nationalists. […] [Neo-nationalism is] an essentialist and seclusive reaction against the current
> phase of globalization […] [that] primarily relates to 'culture.' (Banks
> and Gingrich 2006, 9, 15, 17)

Ajanovic, Mayer and Sauer (2015, 2016)'s analysis of right-wing extremist discourses in Austria confirms the existence of a neo-racism that takes on a cultural form. In Austria such ideological discourses tend to have a strong anti-Muslim orientation. A negative difference between Austrians and Muslims is

proclaimed. Muslims and immigrants are said to cause social problems and cultural decline. The authors document ideological arguments for keeping social spaces (schools, religious space, public space, kindergartens, transportation, work places, local spaces, and so on) free from what is perceived as foreign influence. Political ethno-pluralism is the political conclusion drawn from such discourses: The implication of this ideology is Austria should close its borders for migrants, oppose a multicultural society, and that, if any at all, only assimilated migrants are acceptable.

Immanuel Wallerstein argues that racism and sexism are necessary elements of capitalism. Racism and xenophobia are strategies in capitalism to 'minimize the costs of production' and to 'minimize the costs of political disruption (hence minimize – not eliminate, because one cannot eliminate – the protests of the labour force)' (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, 33). Sexism invents houseworkers and asserts they are 'not 'working', merely 'keeping house' (35). Housework is not just reproduced labour-power, but is also an 'indirect subsidy to the employers of the wage labourers in these households' (34). The connection of sexism and (new) racism in capitalism is that they are both anti-universalist ideologies that legitimate low- and no-wage labour and discrimination.

Given the concepts of ideology and nationalist ideology, we can next have a short look at how the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) has made and advanced a particular form of Austrian nationalism that has turned it – measured in election results – into Europe's most successful far-right parliamentary party.

8.4. The Freedom Party of Austria's History and Ideology

The Freedom Party of Austria (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ) emerged in 1955 from the Association of the Independents (Verband der Unabhängigen) that was founded in 1949 and was the home of many former Austrian members of the Nazi Party. Until 1986, the FPÖ had both a liberal and a German-nationalist wing. In 1983, the FPÖ under the liberal leadership of Norbert Steger entered a coalition government with the Social Democrats. In 1986, Jörg Haider became the FPÖ's new leader. The Social Democrats ended the coalition government because they saw the rise of Haider as a shift of the FPÖ towards the far-right. In 1991, Haider praised Hitler's employment policy by saying: 'In the Third Reich, they carried out an orderly employment policy, which is not even accomplished by your government in Vienna'.[2] Haider ignored the fact that Hitler's employment offensive was part of Germany's armament and his plan of starting the Second World War. 'This respectable occupation of people, which is described here in such positive terms, served, as we all know, to prepare for a war of extermination' (Wodak 2002, 40). Brigitte Bailer-Galanda and Wolfgang Neugebauer (1997, 102) write that the 'FPÖ represents a successful new adaptation of old right-wing extremism'.

Under Haider's right-wing populist leadership, the FPÖ continuously extended its voting share in national elections. Haider used election slogans such as „Stop der Überfremdung!" (*Stop the overforeignisation!*). In 1993, he started the anti-immigration-referendum „Österreich zuerst!" (*Austria first!*). The referendum that called for completely stopping immigration and creating the constitutional provision that 'Austria is not an immigration country' was signed by 7.35% of the electorate. In 1999, the FPÖ reached 26.91% in the federal elections, became the second strongest party, and formed a coalition government together with the Conservative Party ÖVP. This right-wing coalition was in power from February 2000 until April 2005. It was isolated in the European Union. The FPÖ split into two parties, which weakened both temporarily.

In 2008, Jörg Haider died in a car accident. Heinz-Christian Strache became the Austrian far-right's new leader. He has been the FPÖ's leader since 2005. Strache used campaign slogans such as „Daham statt Islam. WIR für EUCH" ('Homeland instead of Islam: WE are for YOU'), „Wien darf nicht Istanbul werden" ('Vienna must not turn into Istanbul'), „Mehr Mut für unser, 'Wiener Blut: Zu viel Fremdes tut niemandem gut" ('More courage for our 'Viennese Blood': Too much foreignness is not good for anyone'). In the Austrian federal elections 2013, the FPÖ reached 20.51% of the votes. In national opinion polls on electoral preference, the FPÖ has since 2014 continuously achieved the highest share of potential votes (up to 35%) and has significantly stayed ahead of the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) (data source: neuwal.com). Michał Krzyżanowski (2013) argues that the FPÖ has undergone an ideological transition, from a focus on general opposition to immigration under Jörg Haider in the years 1986–2005, towards Islamophobia since 2005.

Austria is one of the European countries hit much less by the 2008 economic crisis than others. So, for example, its unemployment rate stayed relatively constantly around 5% in the years 2008–2015, whereas in Greece it increased from 7.8% in 2008 to 24.9% in 2015 (data source: Eurostat). In Spain, the increase was from 11.3% to 22.1% (data source: Eurostat). Nonetheless one can observe a very significant increase of the far-right's support in Austria, which shows that we cannot simply assume supporters of the far-right are the losers of modernisation, crisis and globalization; they project their fears of potential future social decline onto foreigners and minorities. Neo-nationalist and new racist campaigns often 'address and instrumentalize concerns and fears about downward social mobility' (Gingrich 2006, 47). Heribert Schiedel (2007, 49–50, 59) argues in this context that crises can condition fears of social downfall and that in such situations it is crucial whether citizens find meaningful alternatives to right-wing populism. It is an important factor in such situations, to what degree right-wing populists try to create chauvinist, xenophobic, racist and anti-Semitic fear so that citizens are encouraged to project their aggressions into surrogate objects.

Norbert Hofer was a co-author of the 2011 FPÖ's party programme that defines Austria as being culturally German:

> We are committed to our homeland of Austria as part of the German-speaking linguistic and cultural community, to the groups of people native to our country and to a Europe of free peoples and fatherlands. […] The language, history and culture of Austria are German. The vast majority of Austrians are part of the German peoples', linguistic and cultural community. […] Austria is not a country of immigration. (FPÖ 2011)

The FPÖ defines the nation based on language, history and culture. It claims that Austrians are part of the German cultural nation and that nations must be kept separate, which is why it opposes multiculturalism. It misses that Austria has been a multicultural society for a long time – since the time of the Austrian empire. To define Austria as exclusively German was the project of the Nazis during the time of Hitler.

The Austrian president has a symbolic role. The major power lies with the government. Hofer in his electoral campaign announced that as Austrian president he would change this division of power and act not just symbolically; he would dismiss the government if it did not accord to his prospects, for example in respect to refugee and immigration policies. 'I have said that I dismiss the government if it breaks laws, breaks the constitution or again and again takes measures that harm the country. And then, the last step, the ultimo ratio, in order to avert damage from the country, can be the government's dissolution'[3] (ATV, 15 May 2016). Green Party candidate Van der Bellen commented:

> This would mean that the government acts by order of the President. But it is exactly the other way round: The President has to respect the government's suggestions. If you are elected and you really pursue this style, then we are on the way into an authoritarian republic[4]. (ATV, May 15, 2016)

Who votes for the FPÖ? In the Austrian federal elections 2013, where the FPÖ achieved 20.5% of the vote, it was the strongest party among men (28%), blue-collar workers (33%), those aged 16–29 (22%), and those whose highest educational attainment is a polytechnic school (35%) – a one-year practical education that prepares pupils at the age of 14 for starting an apprenticeship (SORA 2013). The typical FPÖ voter is a young, male blue-collar worker with a low level of education (Pelinka 2002). In 2014, the EU-wide average share of those who were aged 25 or above and held at least a bachelor's degree, was 22.3% (data source: UNESCO Statistics). Austria had with 12.25% the lowest share of all 22 EU countries for which data is available (data source: UNESCO Statistics).

Also, in the 2016 presidential election, such divisions of the social structure of voters became evident: in the second round, 60% of the male voters cast their ballot for Hofer, but only 40% of the women did the same. 86% of the

blue-collar workers supported Hofer, whereas 60% of the white-collar workers voted for the Green party candidate Alexander Van der Bellen. Of those who only completed compulsory education 55% cast their vote for Hofer. The same can be said for about 67% of those who completed apprenticeships and about 58% of those whose highest educational attainment was the completion of a vocational school (*berufsbildende mittlere Schule*, BMS). In contrast, 73% of those who had passed school leaving examinations (*Matura*) and 81% of the university-educated voters opted for Van der Bellen (source of all data: SORA 2016). Class and education are key factors influencing voting behaviour in Austria.

I will next discuss the methodology of the empirical research conducted for this study.

8.5. Methodology

Netvizz is a software tool that facilitates the extraction of data from Facebook groups and pages. I used Netvizz in order to collect comments on postings related to Hofer's presidential candidacy. I accessed Norbert Hofer and Heinz Christian Strache's Facebook pages on 30 May 2016, and I used Netvizz to extract comments to postings made between 25 and 30 May. Given that the collected comments were posted in the days after the presidential election's second round, it is likely that the dataset contains data referring to the political differences between Hofer and Van der Bellen. I selected postings by Hofer and Strache that were particularly polarising. This selection resulted in a total of 15 postings: 10 by Strache, 5 by Hofer. There were a total of 6,755 comments posted as responses to these 15 Facebook postings, so the analysed dataset consisted of 6,755 items.

I conducted a critical discourse analysis of the dataset. *First*, I identified discourse topics. Discourses are semantic structures that consist of certain topics. A discourse topic is a semantic macro-proposition (van Dijk 1987, 48–50) or an interpretative repertoire that is a bounded linguistic building block for actions and their representations (Potter and Wetherell 1988, 172). *Second*, I searched for typical examples of these discourse topics that were included in further analysis. *Third*, I looked at how the comments constructed an Us/Them-distinction. This included an analysis of how 'We' and 'They' were characterized. In critical discourse analysis such characterisations are called nominations and predications. These are discursive strategies for characterising persons or phenomena in specific ways (Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 44–56). Predication is the 'discursive qualification of social actors, objects, phenomena, events/processes and actions' as 'more or less positively or negatively' (Reisigl and Wodak 2009, 94). I tried to identify ideological strategies of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation that were used for constructing a collective identity.

Teun van Dijk's (2011) *ideological square*-model is based on the assumption that there are four common ideological argumentation strategies:

– To emphasize positive things about Us (=the in-group).
– To emphasize negative things about Them (=the out-group).
– To de-emphasize negative things about Us.
– To de-emphasize positive things about Them.

'The complex meta-strategy of the ideological square tells us that group members will tend to speak or write positively about their own group, and negatively about those out-groups they define as opponents, competitors or enemies' (van Dijk 2011, 397).

When conducting social media analysis, questions of research ethics should be considered. It therefore is feasible to review such questions as far as they are relevant for the study presented in this work. Boellstorff, Nardi, Pearce and Taylor (2012), in their textbook *Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Methods*, argue for an ethics of care position in virtual world research that focuses on obtaining informed consent, avoiding harm, providing benefits to study participants, and so on. The online world has moved on from virtual worlds, such as Second Life and World of Warcraft, to social media, such as Facebook and Twitter that are now far more popular. So, we today need an Internet ethics focusing on social media that takes the complex relation between public and private on these sites into account.

Janet Salmons (2016), in her textbook *Doing Qualitative Research Online*, distinguishes *extant*, *elicited* and *enacted* online research methods. Extant methods study existing online materials created independently of the researcher's influence. Elicited methods study data that participants elicit in response to the researcher's questions. Enacted methods study data that researchers generate with participants in a study. Each type would have specific ethical requirements. There are different ethical traditions and theories. They have different implications for online research (59–68): deontology focuses on ethical rules and guidelines (such as the guidelines of the Association for Internet Researchers). Consequentialism focuses on research outcomes. Virtue ethics focuses on the researcher's self-defined moral principles. The ethics of care give attention to participants' preferences. Salmons argues for finding a synthesis between such positions in online research. Online platforms are public or private to varying degrees. Salmons identifies a continuum ranging from public online environments that are openly accessible without barriers to private online environments that only provide access by permission. She argues that many ethical guidelines do not require informed consent for collecting data from public online platforms when the researcher does not influence the creation of the data (85–86). Hewson, Vogel and Laurent (2016, 111), in their textbook *Internet Research Methods*, argue that public online data is 'perhaps the least contentious in terms of being clearly in the public domain, and thus arguably available for the use as research data' without obtaining informed consent.

The British Psychological Society (BPS) argues in its *Code of Ethics and Conduct* that online observation should only take place when and where users

'reasonably expect to be observed by strangers' (BPS 2009, 13). In its *Ethics Guidelines for Internet-Mediated Research*, the BPS (2013, 6) stresses the blurring between public and private space on the Internet, which complicates research ethics. 'Where it is reasonable to argue that there is likely no perception and/or expectation of privacy (or where scientific/social value and/or research validity considerations are deemed to justify undisclosed observation), use of research data without gaining valid consent may be justifiable' (BPS 2013, 7).

The Facebook pages of Norbert Hofer and Heinz Christian Strache are public pages. All postings and comments on them are visible to everyone visiting them, not just to those who like them. One does not have to have a Facebook profile to access the two pages. They can also be viewed without logging into Facebook. All postings and all comments are visible in public. Furthermore, politicians are public figures. Citizens expect them to stand in and be present in the public. This includes the expectation that on social media they post in public and offer possibilities for public communication on their profiles. Given the public character of Strache and Hofer's Facebook pages, it is reasonable to assume that someone posting a comment on such a page can expect to be observed by strangers. In such a case, one does not have to obtain informed consent for analysing and quoting such comments. Given that the users are not public figures themselves, but only make public comments when posting on a politician's public Facebook page, I do not mention the usernames in the analysis. Netvizz does not save the usernames so that the collected dataset does not contain any identifiers. The original comments were posted in German. In this article, I only provide English translations of quotes, not the German originals.

8.6. Analysis and Interpretation

In figures 1–15 in the appendix I show the postings by Strache and Hofer selected as data sources for the empirical analysis. I also present translations of these postings' text. In their Facebook postings, Strache and Hofer try to present the FPÖ as a reliable and responsible centre party that represents, takes care of and defends Austrian interests. They emotionalize the relationship of Hofer and the Austrians by calling him the 'President of Hearts'. This formulation implies that Hofer is a true patriot who loves Austria. The implication is that Alexander Van der Bellen is unpatriotic. The FPÖ's patriotic love to Austria is also expressed by formulations such as 'our homeland Austria and its people!' ('We are committed to our homeland Austria and its people!') or 'our Austria' ('We will in any case continue to take care of our Austria'). Thus, one of the rhetorical strategies is the emotionalisation of Austrian nationalism. Austria is presented is a homogeneous national collective that is under threat. Strache and Hofer identify a negative outside for constructing a nationalistic identity.

Many of these postings contain links to online articles published in newspapers (oe24.at, krone.at, diepresse.com) and blogs (unzensuriert.at). This fact is

a manifestation of the intertextuality of online discourse: Discourses are not contained in themselves, but they take networked forms. In the online world, this means that news media refer to the comments and social media profiles of politicians, whereas politicians link to articles that mention them favourably or attack those that are critical of them. The media have played a particular role in the making of Jörg Haider, HC Strache and Norbert Hofer. By engaging in helping to perform the right-wing populist spectacle, they hope to gain a larger number of users, readers, viewers and listeners. unzensuriert.at is a blog that has gained particular interest among supporters of Austria's far-right. The media company 1848 Medienvielfalt (1848 Media Plurality) published it. Its managing director Walter Asperl worked for FPÖ MP Martin Graf, while the latter was deputy speaker in the Austrian Parliament. Chief Editor Alexander Höferl was Graf's press officer. Unzensuriert understands itself as being 'committed to the truth' and as fostering media plurality. It also operates a YouTube channel that in August 2016 had around 11,000 subscribers, a Facebook page (around 47,000 likes in August 2016), and a Twitter account. It makes use of a multitude of popular social media formats, in which the FPÖ, Strache and Hofer are very frequently the main topics. Far-right social media presences, the sensationalist press and the FPÖ stand in a mutually beneficial relationship.

This perceived threat to Austria is characterized as consisting of social democrats, the Green Party's presidential candidate Alexander Van der Bellen, the Ministry of the Interior, the European Union (in the form of the President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz and the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker), and the Austrian government. Nationalism is not just constructed by positive self-presentation, but also by negative other-presentation: It works by saying that others have insulted the FPÖ and have characterized the party as far-right, that they divide the country and play with fire, that there were abnormalities, malpractices and illegalities in the counting of the votes in the presidential election, that foreigners try to lecture Austrians, and that there is the destruction of Austria and the centralisation of power. The net effect is the attempt to create the impression that Austria is under attack by a union of foreign powers and Left-leaning politicians.

8.6.1. The First Discourse Topic: Charismatic Leadership

In the dataset, a *first discourse strategy* focused on constructing an *in-group* of Hofer and Strache supporters by mentioning positive aspects of both politicians and presenting the two politicians as *charismatic leaders*. Here are some examples:

'7 of 9 federal states have voted for Norbert Hofer. He is the President of Hearts' (#1098)
  'I find Mr Hofer and Mr Strache very sympathetic and highly competent' (#2514)

'An extraordinarily sympathetic person. […] His statements are communicated in a very comprehensive manner to people who have not studied' (#5948)

'Dear Mr Hofer, You can express yourself very elegantly and you are a comforting person' (#5988)

'You [Norbert Hofer] are a man of character and it is to wish that you become our real President of Hearts' (#5196)

'Mr Hofer is a very impressive personality. Thank you that you stood as candidate for Austria' (#5493)

'I am proud of politicians like you and it makes hope that not-yet-everything is lost in our country as long as we have such great, charismatic, honest politicians' (#5879)

These comments have in common that they emotionalize and personalize Hofer and Strache. The commenters do not assess politicians based on their ideas, but on subjective impressions of their personality and the way they present themselves. The attributes of being sympathetic, competent, comforting, charismatic, honest, and having a good character create positive emotional attachments. Hofer presents himself in public as calm, sympathetic and – for a politician – as relatively young. Personalisation and emotionalisation was part of his electoral campaign. The comments indicate that such emotional politics seem to work among the followers of the FPÖ. The image of Hofer as the President of Hearts goes one step further: it tries to politically utilize feelings of love. Both Strache and Hofer used these politics of love in Facebook postings (see figures 2 and 12). Users positively reacted to this discourse topic and called Hofer their President of Hearts. This image not just expresses voters' admiration for Hofer, but also has a nationalist subtext: it expresses that Hofer loves Austria because of his scepticism of immigration and refugees.

The idealisation of Strache and Hofer is also based on the longing for strong leadership figures. The justification of the leadership ideology 'is charismatic: it rests on the assertion that the Leader is endowed with qualities lacking in ordinary mortals. Superhuman qualities emanate from him and pervade the state, party, and people' (Neumann 2009, 85). FPÖ supporters in the analysed comments tended to construct Strache and Haider as superhuman leaders.

A somatisation is 'the linguistic construction of social actors by synecdochisingly picking out a part or characteristic of their body' (Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 53). On the one hand, users in the dataset used gerontonyms for characterising Hofer: they argued that it is refreshing that he looks relatively young for a politician. On the other hand, they also used general positive somatisations, characterising Hofer as good looking:

'One enjoys listening to him and he moreover looks so well-groomed' (#5948)

'Oh yes, and when someone looks good, then this is even better…
Beautiful people have it easier than ugly ones… ;-)) See Van der Bellen
for example ;-((' (#5867)

'You two [Strache and Hofer] not just have a great party, but also look
damn good' (#5124)

The second example shows that somatisations tend to be used ideologically for
defining a bodily difference between the in-group and the out-group. The char-
acterisation of beauty comes along with a repressive definition of an outsider
as ugly. In this case, Hofer is characterized as beautiful and Van der Bellen
as ugly. This is a personalisation that implies that one should vote for those
characterized as beautiful and not for those who are presented as being ugly.
Personalisation reduces politics to simple bodily, psychological, emotional and
other subjective features of individuals. It empties out political issues from poli-
tics and results in superficial discourses focused on lifestyles, gossips, scandals,
sensationalism, and celebrification.

Jörg Haider strongly advanced emotionalization, personalization and
subjectification as strategies of populist politics in Austria. He appeared as
'fashionable, trendy, and entertaining' (Gingrich 2002, 68). This included in-
formality, events, jokes, music; visits to discos, clubs, beer tents and Sunday
morning pints (the so-called *Frühschoppen*); the staging of Haider as sports-
man; or the use of different traditional, fashionable, stylish or casual fashion
outfits for the right occasions. 'Almost everyone finds popular entertainment,
fun, leisure time, sports, relaxation, and dancing to be normal and sympa-
thetic, and a politician who conspicuously and effectively emphasizes such
activities looks more like a normal family man than do those others who
constantly talk about complicated political, economic, and social matters.
Emphasizing the average, the normal, and the popular thus is Haider's ac-
cess route through mass culture to mainstream voters' (Gingrich 2002, 74).
Right-wing populists tend to make use of celebrity culture and the personalisa-
tion and commodification of politics: they 'oscillate between self-presentations
as *Robin Hood* (i.e. saviour of 'the man and woman in the street') and self-pres-
entations as 'rich, famous and/or attractive' (i.e. an 'idol'), frequently leading
to a 'softer' image' (Wodak 2013, 28). Strache and Hofer in many respects copy
Haider's strategies of the personalisation and commodification of politics. They
continue the Haiderisation of politics (Wodak 2013).

Other comments personalized politics by arguing that Hofer and Strache
were symbols of Austrian national unity:

'Mr Strache, Mr Hofer. You two are Austria's guardian angels' (#94)

'Yes to Austria and yes to our protector Norbert Hofer. That's the only
way it can work' (#203)

'Hofer is at least a real Austrian name. :-)' (#1804)

'Our president [Hofer] who stands for us Austrians' (#6083).

'Norbert Hofer!!!! Austria again and again' (#6144)

'Dear HC Strache. To be totally honest!!! You from the FPÖ are the only hope for our beloved homeland Austria!! Please continue this way and keep a very very strict eye on these traitors to the country and the people!!! I wish you all the best on your way forward!!! Comradely greetings from a convinced Austrian patriot!!! ;-)' (#3422)

These users argue that Hofer has a German name, represents Austria and that the FPÖ stands for the love of the homeland and patriotism. The use of linguonyms (German family name) and nationyms (nation, homeland, and so on) serves the purpose of describing Austria as a German-speaking cultural nation that should be kept free from immigrants and refugees. Hofer and Strache are seen as the symbols of Austrian nationalism. The reference to Hofer as a 'real Austrian name' is an indirect reference to the fact that Van der Bellen is a Dutch name and that Alexander Van der Bellen's ancestors lived in Russia and Estonia. His parents emigrated from Estonia to Austria. The implication of such arguments is that a presidential candidate who was not born in Austria cannot represent Austrian interests and is likely to be immigration-friendly. It is the call that Austrians should prefer xenophobic, racist and nationalist politicians. 'Austria again and again' is a reference to a popular chant of Austrian football fans at matches of the Austrian national team.[5] 'Immer wieder Österreich' (Austria all over again) is also the title an election song that the FPÖ used in the 2015 Vienna local elections.[6] The description of Strache and Hofer as Austria's guardian angels, of Hofer as protector and as representing 'us Austrians' is an expression of the ideological belief in a strong leader who protects the Austrian nation from immigrants and other perceived enemies.

8.6.2. The Second Discourse Topic: Austrian Nationalism

A *second discourse topic* was *Austrian nationalism*. It varies from the first in that it did not identify individual leaders as symbols of Austrian nationalism, but spoke about the importance of unifying the Austrian nation in more general terms.

'But also we are compelled to advocate our homeland and care for a better future' (#20)

'Austria must be preserved for us as Austrians' (#3526)

'Austria first' (#4010)

'Love for the home country is not a crime!!! But to watch how Austria is becoming destroyed is one…' (#5318)

Karl Marx (1867) introduced the concept of commodity fetishism. He describes the commodity as a 'strange' (163), 'metaphysical' (163), 'mystical' (164), and

'mysterious' (164) entity that 'transcends sensuousness' (163). The commodity 'stands on its head' so that odd ideas about the nature of the commodity can emerge. As a consequence, the social relations between humans appear not 'as direct social relations between persons in their work, but rather as material relations between persons and social relations between things' (166). 'Grotesque ideas' (163) that naturalize forms of domination and exploitation are the result. Fetishistic thought is not limited to the economy, where the commodity, class, money, capital, and so on appear as natural, but also extends to the political world.

Nationalism is a form of political fetishism that presents a constructed national community as unitary, naturally grown, necessary, superior, and mythological by focusing on stressing a common culture, history, language, ethnicity, territory, and so on. It tries to deflect attention from how class relations and power inequalities shape society. Nationalism tries 'through a mythology of unity and identity, to project a 'common instinctual fate' (uniform social status) between bourgeois and proletarianized groups, eliding the reality of social distinction in differentiated class societies' (Woodley 2010, 17). Nationalism is an ideology that a) 'divides the world into 'us' and 'them', 'friends' and 'foes', positing a homogeneous and fixed identity on either side and stressing the characteristics that differentiate 'us' from 'them'' (Özkirimli 2010, 208), b) makes temporal claims to an authentic connection of national citizens and their common past, as well as c) spatial claims to territory in the form of 'the quest for a "home"' (Özkirimli 2010, 209).

In 1993, the FPÖ conducted an anti-immigration referendum that was signed by 7.35% of Austria's eligible voters. The referendum's title was 'Austria first'. One of its demands was to add a clause to the Austrian constitution stating that 'Austria is not a country of immigration'. In 2009, HC Strache published a rap song titled 'Austria first' (Österreich zuerst). In 2011, the FPÖ titled its official party programme 'Austria First' (FPÖ 2011).

Many comments in the analysed dataset propagate Austrian nationalism. They argue that Austria as a homeland should come first and that it faces the threat to be destroyed by immigrants and refugees. The implication is that Austria must be defended against foreign influences and should be a unitary cultural nation. Austrian nationalism constructs the Austrian nation as a homogeneous unit of Austrian-born German-speaking individuals who form a national bond by history, language, traditions, and culture. It sees this unity under attack by immigration, refugees and transnational institutions such as the EU. The consequence of this ideology is a call to defend the Austrian nation. Austrian national unity is just like all nationalism: a pure ideological construction. The dialects spoken in Burgenland and Vorarlberg, the easternmost and westernmost Austrian federal states, are so different that citizens living in the two regions often have to resort to standard German in order to understand each other. Burgenland was part of Hungary from 1648 to 1921 and only became part of Austria in 1921. Hence the joint history of contemporary Austria

is historically fairly recent. Gruber is the most common German family name in Austria.[7] In 2016, there were 915 entries for this surname in Vienna's telephone book.[8] Nowak is a very common Czech name. In 2016, there were 301 entries for it in Vienna's phone directory.[9] The prevalence of both German and non-German family names shows Austria's multicultural nature: many Austrian families have immigrant roots that date back to an earlier generation.

8.6.3. The Third Discourse Topic: The Friend-Enemy Scheme

In ideologies, positive self-presentation of the in-group is often accompanied by negative other-presentation of the out-group. In far-right ideology, the out-group is often presented as the enemy who threatens the in-group and should therefore be controlled, excluded or removed. The 'friend-enemy distinction implied by Manichean demonization […] plays a fundamental role in codifying enmity' (Woodley 2010, 9). Manicheanism is a highly polarising worldview that sees the world as constituted by opposing good and evil forces. A *third discourse topic* found in the analysed comments was a Manichean worldview that used the *friend-enemy scheme* for constructing a hostile out-group. Van der Bellen was presented as the leader of the out-group and as its most despicable representative.

Some referred to Van der Bellen as 'Woof-Woof' (Wau-Wau):

> 'We want Norbert Hofer as president and not the Woof-Woof' (#338)
> 'Now the Woof-Woof is the leader of the red-green mafia' (#333)

Such statements are a vilification of Van der Bellen's name, playing with the fact that 'bellen' means to bark in German. Linguistic animalisation and biologisation is a typical semiotic strategy in far-right ideology. The aim is to dehumanize the enemy and to present him/her as a lower type of being.

Van der Bellen was also presented as being a communist and dictator:

> 'But let us now be glad and happy that Mr VdB saves us as communist – because communism has of course only always done the best for the people' (#564)
> 'VdB is de-facto the 2nd [Austrian] republic's first dictator, a flawless anti-democrat!!!' (#1147)
> 'Also Stalin ignored the people – Isn't Bello also a communist, right?' (#1623)
> 'A dictator, but one would not have expected anything else from this green liar' (#1742)
> 'The Austrian Stalin' (#2237)
> 'Joseph Stalin and Tito look down to us. You have found a worthy successor in the People's Republic of Austria under the leader VdB' (#1846)

A common comment of FPÖ supporters on Facebook was that they described Van der Bellen as a dictator comparable to Stalin and Tito. By calling Van der Bellen a communist, such users alluded to the fact that at the age of twenty Van der Bellen had once voted for the Austrian Communist Party KPÖ. The use of strongly emotionally connoted politonyms such as 'communist' and 'dictator' aims at communicating political danger and presenting the enemy as dangerous.

Most of these postings refer to Alexander Van der Bellen's declaration that as Austrian President he would not provide a mandate to the FPÖ to form a government if the party were the relatively strongest force after elections. On 24 May 2018 the German public service broadcasting channel ARD interviewed Van der Bellen, who said in the news programme *Tagesthemen*: 'My concerns are not of a personal nature. I have always stressed this fact. They are a matter of European politics because the FPÖ so to speak plays in various suggestions with fire. It flirts with the re-nationalisation of the European Union'.[10] In another interview, Van der Bellen also commented on this issue: 'We are not in favour of the world's LePens governing us'.[11] In Van der Bellen's view, the FPÖ spreads nationalism and xenophobia. His fear is that it has an anti-democratic agenda. This is the reason why he argues against a FPÖ mandate to form the Austrian government. Strache, in one of his Facebook postings (see figure 5), inverted this logic and asked: 'Who splits the country and plays with fire?' He thereby implied that not the FPÖ, but Van der Bellen advanced a dangerous form of politics.

Article 70 of the Austrian Federal Constitution regulates that the 'Chancellor and on his/her recommendation the other members of the federal government are appointed by the President'.[12] It does not provide regulations, to which party leader the President gives the mandate to form a government. That the Austrian President chooses not to provide such a mandate to the strongest party after election because s/he is afraid there are anti-democratic tendencies in this party is within the democratic merit of the Austrian constitution. It is by no means anti-democratic or dictatorial. To argue that Van der Bellen is anti-democratic ideologically inverts and distorts political reality.

Other commenters used the somatisation of Van der Bellen as dirty and ill to characterise him:

> Who splits the country and plays with fire? A good question that can be answered quickly: The grotty and geriatric '68 generation (#1886)
>> The old, dishevelled man (#1991)
>> This train station vagabond should go and shit himself (#2188)
>> Unshaved, shabby trench tramp (#2189)
>> Allegedly the old one has cancer from smoking (#6356)

In 2016, Van der Bellen was 72 years old and Norbert Hofer 45. Descriptions of Van der Bellen as old, shabby, unshaved, ill, dishevelled or grotty are aimed at setting up a dichotomy that delegitimizes Van der Bellen and legitimizes Hofer

by references to bodily appearance and health. Right-wing ideology often codes the Us/Them distinction inherent in the friend-enemy scheme as a series of dualisms: on the one side we find something on the inside that is presented as modern, popular, entertaining, colourful, young, attractive, ordinary, good-looking, or healthy. On the other side, the opposition is presented as outdated, timid, boring, unappealing, old, unattractive, withdrawn, dirty, or ill.

Other enemies mentioned in comments were the European Union, mass media like the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation, social democrats, Greens, migrants, and Islam:

> [EU Commission President] Juncker must go!!! The Brussels terrorists (#3640)
>
> Hopefully this pigsty EU decays soon! (#3659)
>
> The lying press says the FPÖ is the problem and not mass immigration, criminality, Islamisation, the EU, the ECB [European Central Bank], bureaucratisation, the loss of prosperity, and so on. That's also how the GDR [German Democratic Republic] ended, and the red-green-black [= alliance of Social Democrats-Greens-Conservatives] dictatorship will end exactly the same way! (#4145)
>
> The aggressive ORF moderator [Lou Lorenz-Dittlbacher, who conducted a critical TV interview with Strache] is annoying – just like the whole contaminated ORF! [Austrian Broadcasting Corporation = Austria's public service broadcaster] Somehow understandable, they all fear for their jobs. If the FPÖ had to decide on that: No compulsory licence fees any longer → No ORF any longer. Sometime it will happen (#4279)

Jean-Claude Juncker congratulated Van der Bellen on his (preliminary) victory. The President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, said that this preliminary win was a 'defeat of Eurosceptics'[13]. In the analysed dataset, FPÖ supporters reacted in a very Manichean and defensive manner to any criticism of Hofer, Strache or the FPÖ. They presented themselves as victims of a conspiracy instigated by a union of green, social democratic and conservative politicians, the media, the EU, immigrants and refugees, communists, Freemasonry, and so on. They perceive themselves and the FPÖ to be under constant attack, and construct themselves as victims – which disregards that it is the FPÖ and its followers who tend to construct scapegoats, especially migrants, refugees and Islam. The perceived association of enemies is verbally attacked by the use of strong political categories (terrorism, dictatorship, and so on) on the one hand, and biologistic language (pigsty, contamination, and so on) on the other hand.

It is not a surprise that one of the identified enemies is the EU. The FPÖ already under Jörg Haider turned into a Eurosceptic party. Haider for example wrote in 1993: 'If this Europe is not to be a cultural and linguistic pabulum coming from the Brussels bureaucrats' meat chopper, then the development

into a Europe of peoples and ethnic groups must be enabled' (cited in: Bailer-Galanda and Neugebauer 1997, 192). In 1996, he said: 'But our idea of Europe is not a pabulum in Brussels, but our idea is a Europe of home countries' (cited in: Bailer-Galanda and Neugebauer 1997, 193). The FPÖ's (2011) Party Programme is committed to a 'Europe of free peoples and fatherlands'. It spells out that the EU is questioned because it is seen as a danger to nationalism. 'We are committed to a Europe of peoples and autochthonous groups of people which have developed through history, and firmly reject any artificial synchronisation of the diverse European languages and cultures by means of forced multiculturalism, globalization and mass immigration. Europe shall not be reduced to a political project of the European Union' (FPÖ 2011). Austrian nationalism that puts 'Austria first' was also evident in the analysed comments. Euroscepticism was very present. Hofer argues for an Austrian referendum on leaving the EU (Öxit, Auxit) in case of 'Turkey joining – but also if the EU becomes more centralistic'.[14]

8.6.4. The Fourth Discourse Topic: New Racism

A *fourth discourse topic* found in the dataset was *new racism and xenophobia*. It is closely related to the friend-enemy scheme. Immigrants and refugees were seen as the main threat to the Austrian nation.

> 'For the FPÖ, the Austrian to whom this country belongs first, also when refugees are on the way the Austrian MUST come first!' (#3964)
> 'The SPÖ and its friends have destroyed, estranged and islamised our country!' (#4144)
> 'Please do something before Islam swamps us !!!!!!!!' (#119)
> 'They [those not born in Austria] do not have our roots, not our religion' (#205)
> 'Austria must first look for its own citizens, in respect to jobs, that they are motivated and have a meaningful life. Only then can we think of asylum seekers!!' (#6457)
> 'What are the SPÖ [Social Democratic Party of Austria] and the Greens? In my view they are hostile towards native citizens [inländerfeindlich].... Because they allow the mass immigration of criminals.... Rapists, killers etc... Where will this end?' (#584)
> 'I do not want that we in Austria give shelter to even more 'refugees' that are none, on a mandatory basis every year, are you still normal at all? Who wants that, not me and also not 50%!' (#2585)
> 'I feel sorry for people who for example live in Traiskirchen [Austrian town with the country's largest refugee camp] or parents in Vienna, Salzburg or Linz, whose children commute to school per train, subway or bus day by day. They live in the daily fear whether their children get

home safely […] For me, our own country is important, the future as well as safeguards for my children […] I am a realist and patriot who loves his country and its population!!!' (#5307).

'The country needs other politicians. Austrians first. These politics suck. Foreigners receive more than we taxpayers' (#64)

'We do not need even more asylum seekers in our beautiful Austria because we have enough of our own people who are in need of help. In my opinion one first and foremost has to do something for us Austrians before we always throw money at others' (#5916)

Whereas nationalism defines an illusionary inside of a national community, new racism is a repressive politics that defines and struggles against the perceived outside and makes use of racialising ideological practices for defending the inside/outside differentiation with violent means. The defence of boundaries takes place not just outside, but also inside a nation state. 'Racism is constantly emerging out of nationalism, not only towards the exterior but towards the interior' (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, 53). New racism operates 'by constructing impassable symbolic boundaries between racially constituted categories, and its typically binary system of representation constantly marks and attempts to fix and naturalize the difference between belongingness and otherness' (Hall 1989/1996, 445). The out-group is often presented in the form of stereotypes that reduce, essentialize, naturalize, and fix the power differences between the in-group and the out-group (Hall 1997, 258). New racism justifies the exploitation, exclusion, domination, or annihilation of an out-group. One can draw a 'distinction between a racism of extermination or elimination (an "exclusive" racism) and a racism of oppression or exploitation (an "inclusive" racism)' (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, 39).

The new racism present in the cited comments makes use of a number of classical stereotypes that can be summarized in the following statements (see Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 55):

- Cultural stereotypes: 'There are already too many foreigners here and more immigrants and refugees in the country overforeignize our culture and society. Foreigners have a different culture, religion and lifestyle that does not belong into our country'
- Economic stereotypes: 'Foreigners take away Austrians' jobs and dump wages'
- Criminal stereotypes: 'Foreigners are criminals, violent and aggressive'
- Welfare stereotypes: 'Foreigners cost lots of money that we need for our own people. They are socio-parasites who get more out of the welfare and tax system than they pay in'
- Gender stereotypes: 'Foreigners are sexists and rapists. They have an inherently repressive patriarchal attitude towards women'

The new racism immanent in the discussed statements constructs Austrians as an in-group, who are under attack by foreigners as an out-group who come to Austria as immigrants and refugees. It aims at defending a pure Austrian nation from foreign influences and implicitly argues that only Austrian-born, white, German-speaking Roman-Catholics should be allowed to live in the country. Foreigners are presented as an alien social and cultural out-group that threatens Austria's culture (language, customs, habits, religion, lifestyle), economy (jobs, wages) and social system (crime and violence, welfare, gender relations). The statements imply an exclusive new racism, i.e. that foreigners should have to leave the country.

8.6.5. The Fifth Discourse Topic: Violence

The *fifth discourse topic* present in the dataset is a radicalisation of the friend/enemy- scheme: the threat or wish to use *violence against the perceived enemies*.

'Only a rebellion of patriots would now help and EVERYONE JOINS IN!' (#3163)
   'If the EU violently imposes penalties on differing opinions, then this is clearly dictatorship and that's something the majority will not accept. There will then be uprisings and demonstrations with more or less outbursts of violence' (#167).
   'The time will come where they all fall into the pit… AND WE WILL THEN FILL UP THE PIT!!!!!' (#5862)

[Users about the Austrian writer Robert Menasse's voiced opinion that Strache is a Nazi and a local SPÖ-politician's support for Menasse's statement]:
'Such people should be immediately imprisoned' (#894)
   'I would immediately revoke the Austrian citizenship of SPÖ-local party secretary Reinhard Kadlec and Mr Robert Menasse' (#656)
   'They all together belong into an internment camp because they are a danger to all citizens' (#742)
   'For this statement, he deserves to have his face smashed in' (#571)
'Aha, this pinko should be blown away' (#1426)

[About Alexander Van der Bellen]:
'If the FPÖ would indeed achieve the majority of the votes and Bello carries out this threat, then he should be chased out of office with a wet shred' (#1913) 'My partner is already a bit afraid that I throw the next thing into the direction of the TV when I see VdB! I must really restrain myself because this morning I answered to the greetings of a Romanian who lives in my house by saying 'Go and shit yourself'…' (#3880)

'And then people wonder if the cold lust to kill comes up in a decent Hofer-voter…' (#1945)

[About the journalist Lou Lorenz-Dittlbacher, who conducted a critical interview with Strache]:
'I would have landed the OBNOXIOUS Dittlbacher one in the face. She is even more disgusting than Thurnher [=another ORF television journalist]' (#4571)

Some of the comments demanded demonstrations, a rebellion and uprisings in light of Van der Bellen's preliminary victory in the May 2016 Austrian presidential election. Civil society protests are mostly peaceful, and it is politically dangerous to frame them in the context of violence. There were, however, also comments that explicitly demanded demonstrations with 'outbursts of violence'. Far-right ideology tends to argue for a strong state that enforces law-and-order politics. Some commenters demanded a totalitarian state that limits freedom of speech by imprisoning, interning and stripping citizenship rights from political opponents of the FPÖ. There were calls to chase Van der Bellen out of office and to kill him. There were calls for physical violence against politicians, writers and journalists. Acts of violence mentioned as means that should be directed at identified enemies included hitting, shooting, and general killing.

Such comments display the inherent violent potentials of far-right ideology. The ideological definition of a unitary nation as in-group and enemy out-groups polarizes political relations. Stereotypes aim at ideologically dehumanising the out-groups and at fostering the in-group's aggression and hatred towards the constructed enemies. Right-wing extremism tends to use a 'violent linguistic rhetoric', advance the 'damaging of the political opponent', and has an inherent 'linguistic latency of aggression and defamation' (Holzer 1993, 65). Constant far-right demagoguery against humanists, immigrants, refugees, socialists, and so on can lower the inhibition threshold of citizens who are prone to such ideology and can condition them to voice violent threats against perceived enemies or engage in physical attacks, anonymous online or offline threats, and so on.

The German legal theorist Carl Schmitt, who was associated with Nazism, introduced the friend-enemy scheme in his book *The Concept of the Political*. 'The specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy' (Schmitt 1932/1996, 26). War and physical killing are for Schmitt inherent aspects of the very concept of the enemy: 'For to the enemy concept belongs the ever-present possibility of combat […] The friend, enemy, and combat concepts receive their real meaning precisely because they refer to the real possibility of physical killing. War follows from enmity. War is the existential negation of the enemy. It is the most extreme consequence of enmity' (32–33).

The friend-enemy scheme was at the heart of Nazi fascism. Nazism conceived the Germans as a superior race that needs to form a nation and rid itself of what

it considered to be its enemies, especially Jews, socialists, the working-class movements and communists. Hitler called for the annihilation of Nazism's enemies. 'If the international Jewish financiers in and outside Europe should succeed in plunging the nations once more into a world war, then the result will not be the bolshevization of the earth, and thus the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe, for the time when the non-Jewish nations had no propaganda is at an end' (Hitler 1939). A society based on mass extermination is the most devastating potential consequence of nationalism and fascism. Far-right ideology does not see social problems as the result of structural power inequalities and contradictions of society; instead it personalizes them and inscribes them biologically and/or culturally into individuals and groups. It alleges that specific naturalized and essentialized characteristics belong to conceived enemy groups. Fetishistic thought can lead to violence, and in the final instance to fascism, Nazism and politics of mass annihilation.

8.7. Conclusion

The historian Willibald Holzer (1993) lists the following characteristics of right-wing extremism:

- Stress on the existence and importance of a national community;
- Exclusion of the foreign; Social Darwinism; ethnocentrism; ethnic separatism;
- Authoritarianism, anti-pluralism, opposition to democracy;
- Anti-socialism; focus on competition and performance;
- Authoritarian state;
- Scapegoating;
- Orientation to traditions; apologetic concept of history;
- A political style that features demagogy and acceptance of violence.

The core of right-wing extremism can be summarized as consisting in the principles of 1) authoritarian populism guided by the leadership principle, 2) nationalism, 3) the friend-enemy scheme, and 4) militarism (Fuchs 2017, 2018a). This chapter analysed how voters of Norbert Hofer expressed their support on Facebook. The analysis showed that all key elements of right-wing extremism could be found in online comments.

The leadership principle online was expressed as admiration for Hofer and Strache. Both were seen as charismatic leaders, to whom voters have an emotional relationship. Supporters projected Austrian nationalism into the image of superhuman leaders. Hofer was described as sympathetic, young and good-looking, which reduced politics to personalisation. Austrian nationalism was expressed online through arguments claiming that a unitary Austrian nation consisting of a homogeneous Austrian-born linguistic and cultural community

exists and is under threat by immigration, refugees, socialists, communists, Greens, critical media and transnational institutions such as the EU.

The friend-enemy scheme online could be found in the analysed dataset in the form of Manichean views of and hatred spread against the Green Party presidential candidate Alexander Van der Bellen, journalists, the European Union, the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation ORF, migrants, refugees, Islam, social democrats and the Green party. Van der Bellen was characterized as dictator, communist, animal, dirty, ill, ugly, old, dishevelled and grotty. Immigrants and refugees were seen as the main threat to the Austrian nation. Users employed cultural, economic, criminal and gender stereotypes. Online militarism was present in the form of violent threats to and death wishes for politicians such as Alexander Van der Bellen, writers and journalists.

The overall conclusion of my analysis is that right-wing extremist ideology was very observable and significant in the comments made on the Facebook pages of the leading FPÖ politicians Heinz-Christian Strache and Norbert Hofer. Leadership ideology, nationalism, new racism and xenophobia, the friend-enemy scheme, and militarism constitute important elements of right-wing extremism online. On the one hand, demagogues exercise far-right ideology 'from above'. On the other hand, such ideology can only persist through hegemony 'from below'. Social media is instrumental in fostering both right-wing extremist responses from below and far-right ideology from above. As a result of violence propagated online, after the May 2016 presidential election Alexander Van der Bellen was put under special police protection. One Facebook posting had published his private address and called for terrorist attacks against him. Figure 8.a shows some examples of online violence in the context of the Austrian presidential election.

Answers to the question of how to react to right-wing extremism online are not straightforward. Calls for violence should of course always be reported to the police. At the same time, the Internet will always provide possibilities for anonymity, so there will always be loopholes for militant online fascism. A small number of Van der Bellen supporters posted criticism of far-right ideology on Strache and Hofer's Facebook pages. The following are two example comments:

> The FPÖ is a 'nationalist, xenophobic party under the disguise of love for the homeland' (#5619)
>
> 'How violent are you actually? This is simply just brutal! […] And express your opinions without death threats. I have heard that now even the Cobra [special police unit] must protect Van der Bellen because someone made death threats. You create fear. How do you think that he now feels? Nobody deserves this' (#5847)

Hofer and Strache supporters largely ignored such appeals and arguments. They did not react to them. In some cases, they voiced threats against Van der Bellen supporters:

1. Vienna will fall first. And then we'll see further;
2. The chancellery and the Hofburg [office of the Austrian president] ought to be stormed, and the parliament be burnt down;
3. Those who voted for van der Belln ought to be burnt on the stake;
4. The Glock 17 [a type of pistol] is loaded and ready to fire;
5. It will surely be a bombastic atmosphere;
6. The weapon is unpacked !
7. Onto the streets in order to run riot;
8. What a shame. One really should take to the streets and bring everything to a halt.

Figure 8.a: Examples of online violence in the context of the 2016 Austrian presidential election, source: http://www.oe24.at/oesterreich/politik/Mord-Drohung-gegen-Van-der-Bellen/237125974

'What if once something happens to you, when you are the centre of an act of violence, will you then wake up?' (#4060)

The crisis of capitalism has resulted in an intensification and extension of right-wing extremism that promises simple xenophobic and new racist solutions to social problems. The intensification of online right-wing extremism is a manifestation of this tendency. There are no easy fixes to this unsettling reality. Only profound social, political, socio-economic, educational and cultural responses can ground an effective form of contemporary anti-fascism. Slavoj Žižek (2016,

100) argues that what is needed is 'a positive universal project shared by all participants', a project for the commons that makes different suffering groups see that they 'are parts of one and the same universal struggle' (101). Such a project is commonly called 'socialism'. Given the inherent connection of capitalism, nationalism and new racism, a fundamental change of power relations, the economy and politics is needed in order to avoid the possibility of a 'fascism-producing crisis' (Eley 2015, 112).

The reasons for the rise of the FPÖ in Austria are complex and manifold. They include an incomplete de-Nazification process, Austrian nationalism, Austrian neoliberalism, the role of right-wing media, the institutional containment of class struggle, weakness of the political Left, a low level of general education, and the patronage system (see Fuchs 2016a for a detailed discussion). The FPÖ's electoral successes are an indication that the '"spectre which is haunting Europe", some 60 years after the end of the Third Reich and its national-socialist ideology, is the "spectre of radical right-wing populism"' (Wodak 2013, 24). One must certainly add that the spectre of new racism, new nationalism and the New Right is articulated with capitalist development and class structures – destructive forces that Marx and Engels already criticized when publishing the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848. Right-wing populism combines social issues with nationalism and new racism and pretends to fill the vacuum that has been created by social democracy's move towards embracing neoliberalism and shifting itself towards the right in the political spectrum.

New Right populism is 'the price the Left pays for renouncing any radical political project, and accepting market capitalism as "the only game in town"' (Žižek 2000/2006, 41). 'The populist Right moves to occupy the terrain evacuated by the Left, as the only "serious" political force that still employs an anti-capitalist rhetoric – even if thickly coated with a nationalist/racist/religious veneer' (Žižek 2000/2006, 33–34). The only feasible challenge to the right-wing populist solution is the re-invention of the Left and the creation of a new socialism for the twentieth century. If such a project fails, then we may very well be on the path towards a new fascism in Europe and throughout the world. We are today again at the crossroads that Rosa Luxemburg, citing Friedrich Engels, identified exactly 100 years ago: 'Bourgeois society stands at the crossroads, either transition to socialism or regression into barbarism.' (Luxemburg 1916, 388).

Appendix: Hofer and Strache's Postings on Facebook

HC Strache
30 May at 14:00 · 🌐

Wir sind unserem Heimatland Österreich und den Menschen verpflichtet! Wir gehen unseren Weg verlässlich und konsequent weiter! Danke für Eure große Unterstützung!

Like   Comment   Share

HC Strache and 5.6k others   Top comments

Figure 8.1: Heinz Christian Strache's Facebook posting no. 1.

We are committed to our homeland Austria and its people! We continue reliably and consequently on our path! Thank you for your huge support!

Figure 8.2: Heinz Christian Strache's Facebook posting no. 2.

Norbert Hofer is and remains the President of Hearts! [Image text: President of Hearts]

Figure 8.3: Heinz Christian Strache's Facebook posting no. 3.

That's just primitive and shabby! [Link to an online article titled 'SPÖ local party secretary derails completely: Voters of Hofer are 'Nazis, fascists, idiots'']

HC Strache
29 May at 13:49 · 🌐

Solche Schimpftiraden sind einfach primitiv, letztklassig und ungeheuerlich!
Unser freiheitlicher Vizebürgermeister Michael Schnedlitz (Bild) hat diese
Ungeheuerlichkeit eines hohen SPÖ-Funktionärs in Wiener Neustadt
aufgedeckt.

SPÖ-Politiker bezeichnet Hofer als Nazi
Michael Schnedlitz von der FPÖ fordert eine Entschuldigung und Konsequenzen.

M.OE24.AT

👍 Like   💬 Comment   ➤ Share

👍😡😢 HC Strache and 2.5k others   Top comments ▾

Figure 8.4: Heinz Christian Strache's Facebook posting no. 4.

Such rants are simply primitive, disgraceful and outrageous! Our FPÖ vice-
mayor Michael Schnedlitz (image) has uncovered of a high SPÖ-functionary
in Wiener Neustadt [Link to an online article titled 'SPÖ politician designates
Hofer as a Nazi']

Figure 8.5: Heinz Christian Strache's Facebook posting no. 5.

Who splits the country and plays with fire? [Link to an online article titled 'Alexander Van der Bellen plays with fire']

HC Strache
28 May at 11:30 · 🌐

Wundersame Briefwahlkartenvermehrung sogar um 60.000! Der oberste Wahlleiter Mag. Stein (aus dem BMI - Bundesministerium für Inneres) gerät gehörig unter Druck!

Neben den 5 Bezirken, wo gesetzeswidrig - ohne Wahlbeisitzer - ausgezählt wurde (der Innenminister hat Anzeige erstattet), Waidhofen/Ybbs mit sagenhaften 146% Wahlbeteiligung, der doppelten Stimme dank Briefwahlkarte (aufgedeckt von einem Video-Blogger), und viele andere Hinweise und Ungereimtheiten!

Darüber hinaus die fragwürdige BMI-Hochrechnung - nach über 65% Auszählungsgrad - mit 56,5% für Norbert Hofer, welche in Folge vom BMI gelöscht wurde. Computer irren in der Regel nicht!

Ein veröffentlichtes Online-Briefwahlkartenergebnis vom BMI am Abend des Wahlsonntags, bevor überhaupt die Briefwahlkarten am Montag ab 9 Uhr gesetzeskonform ausgezählt wurden. Dies wurde später ebenso gelöscht und als Fehler und Panne abgetan! Computer machen in der Regel keine Fehler, nur die Personen, die sie steuern und bedienen!!!

In einem ZIB2-Interview sprach Herr Stein von 740.000 Briefwahlkarten (ein Hochrechner aus seinem Ministerium nannte exakt 738.055), welche dann wundersam aus unerklärlichen Gründen noch deutlich angestiegen sind (sogar um rund 60.000!).

Eine international völlig einzigartige, ja fragwürdige hohe Anzahl an ungültigen Stimmen bei den Briefwahlkarten und einiges mehr!

Volle Transparenz, Kontrolle und Aufklärung sind jetzt das Gebot der Stunde! Es geht jetzt um Demokratie und Rechtsstaat! Und das Vertrauen der Bürger in diesen Rechtsstaat und seine demokratischen Grundregeln!

Figure 8.6: Heinz Christian Strache's Facebook posting no. 6.

Miraculous augmentation of the postal voting cards by 60.000! Chief election administrator MA Stein (from the Federal Ministry of the Interior) comes under significant pressure!

Besides the 5 districts, in which the votes were counted illegally without election assessors (the Minister of the Interior filed charges), there was a fabulous turnout of 146% in Waidhofen/Ybbs, one double vote thanks to a postal voting card (uncovered by a video-blogger), and many other hints and inconsistencies!

Furthermore, there was the questionable projection by the Federal Ministry of the Interior that showed 56.5% for Norbert Hofer with 65% of ballots counted. Computers usually do not err!

The Federal Ministry of the Interior had published the result of the postal votes online at the evening of election Sunday before the postal votes were counted on Monday after 9 o'clock. The information was later deleted and

dismissed as error and malfunction! Computers usually do not make mistakes, only the people who control and operate them do!!!

Mr Stein spoke in a ZIB2-interview [evening news programme on the public service broadcasting channel ORF 2] of 740,000 postal votes (a projectionist from his ministry spoke of exactly 738,055) that then miraculously and inexplicably further increased significantly (even by about 60,000!).

There was an internationally completely unique, questionably high amount of invalid ballots among the postal voting cards! And much more!

Full transparency, control and elucidation are now the order of the day! It is now a question of democracy and the rule of law! And a question of citizens' trust in this rule of law and its basic democratic rules!

Figure 8.7: Heinz Christian Strache's Facebook posting no. 7.

The Austrians surely have waited for Mr Schulz's 'good' advice to [the Austrian Chancellor] Kern [Link to the online article 'Hofburg election result is 'a defeat of the Euro-sceptics"]

HC Strache
27 May at 09:20 ·

Junker freut sich, mit Van der Bellen an einem zentralistischen EU-Bundesstaat zu bauen und damit in Wahrheit Österreich abschaffen zu wollen.

Wir werden jedenfalls weiter auf unser Österreich aufpassen!

Juncker malte VdB Herz auf Gratulationsschreiben
https://www.facebook.com/oe24.at/posts/10157023689930529
WWW.OE24.AT

👍 Like   💬 Comment   ➤ Share

👍😠😄 1.6k   Top comments ˅

Figure 8.8: Heinz Christian Strache's Facebook posting no. 8.

Juncker is happy to be able to construct a centralistic EU-federal state together with Van der Bellen. The truth is that this is about Austria's abolition. We will in any case continue to take care of our Austria! [Link to posting titled 'Juncker painted a heart on the letter of congratulation to Van der Bellen']
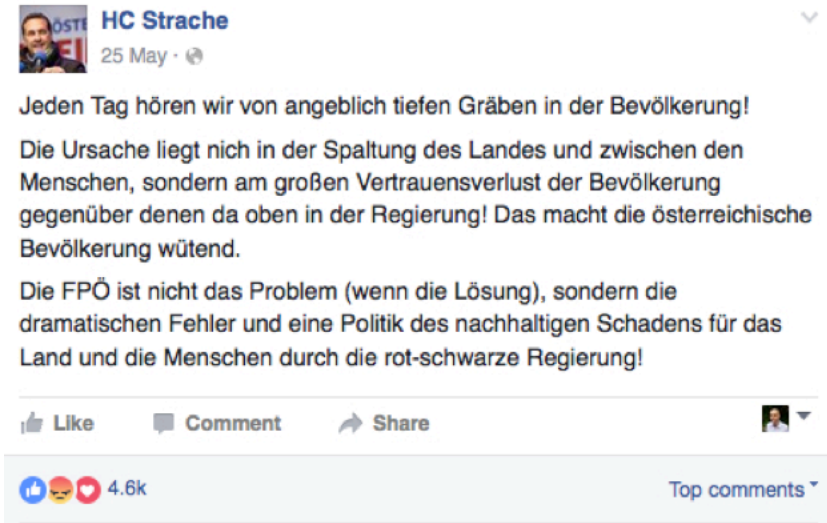
Figure 8.9: Heinz Christian Strache's Facebook posting no. 9

Every day we hear about the allegedly deep divide in the population!

The cause is not the division of the country and of the people, but the population's loss of confidence in those up there in the government! This is what infuriates the Austrian population.

The FPÖ is not the problem (but rather the solution). The problems are the SPÖ/ÖVP-government's dramatic errors and the politics of sustainable harm caused to the country.

Figure 8.10: Heinz Christian Strache's Facebook posting no. 10.

My interview in yesterday's ZIB 2:

Figure 8.11: Norbert Hofer's Facebook posting no. 1.

[Hofer's reposting of Strache's posting no. 1]

Figure 8.12: Norbert Hofer's Facebook posting no. 2.

Here is the current issue of the 'New Free Newspaper', featuring images of and articles on the presidential election [Image text: Norbert Hofer remains the 'President of Hearts']

Norbert Hofer
26 May · 🌐

Die FPÖ ist keine rechtsextreme Partei. Wenn eine rechtsextreme Partei in Österreich angetreten wäre, hätte diese in Österreich vielleicht ein Wahlergebnis von zwei Prozent erreicht. Größer ist der Narrenanteil in Österreich mit Sicherheit nicht. Wir sind eine Mitte-Rechts-Partei mit großer Verantwortung.

Hofer: "Narrenanteil in Österreich höchstens bei zwei Prozent"

Hofer und Strache gratulieren Van der Bellen zum Wahlsieg. Die FPÖ sei keine rechtsextreme Partei, sonst hätte sie nur zwei Prozent erreicht, betont der knapp…

DIEPRESSE.COM

Figure 8.13: Norbert Hofer's Facebook posting no. 3.

The FPÖ is not a right-wing extremist party. If a right-wing extremist party had run in Austria, it would have received an election result of maybe two percent. The share of fools in Austria is definitely not larger. We are a highly responsible centre-right party. [Link to online article titled 'Hofer: 'Share of fools in Austria is at the most two percent']

Figure 8.14: Norbert Hofer's Facebook posting no. 4.

Here are my statements from yesterday's joint press conference with HC Strache

Figure 8.15: Norbert Hofer's Facebook posting no. 5.

My interview with the ORF [Austrian Broadcasting Corporation] from yesterday

Notes

1 The following list was first elaborated and presented in Fuchs (2018b), from where it is reproduced.

2 „Im Dritten Reich haben sie ordentliche Beschäftigungspolitik gemacht. was nicht einmal Ihre Regierung in Wien zusammenbringt" (Protokoll der Sitzung des Kärtner Landtags, 13 June 1991).

3 Original: „Ich habe gesagt, dass ich die Regierung entlasse, wenn die Regierung Gesetze bricht, die Verfassung bricht oder immer wieder Maßnahmen setzt, die dem Land schaden. Dass dann, um Schaden abzuwenden vom Land, der letzte Schritt, die Ultimo Ratio, sein kann, die Regierung zu entlassen".

4 Original: „Das würde ja heißen, die Bundesregierung handelt auf Anordnung des Bundespräsidenten. Es ist aber genau umgekehrt: Der Bundespräsident hat auf Vorschläge der Bundesregierung zu achten. Falls Sie diesen Stil tatsächlich, falls Sie gewählt werden sollten, […] einschlagen sollten, sind wir auf dem Weg in eine autoritäre Republik"

5 See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSg6OkpIacs&feature=youtu.be, accessed on 5 July 2016.

6 See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzyUuRXRQfo, accessed on July 5, 2016.

7 http://www.telefonabc.at/haeufigste-nachnamen.aspx, accessed on 8 June 2016.

8 http://www.herold.at/telefonbuch, accessed on 8 June 2016.

9 http://www.herold.at/telefonbuch, accessed on 8 June 2016.

10 „Meine Bedenken sind nicht persönlicher Art, das habe ich immer betont, sondern europapolitischer Art vor allem, weil die FPÖ in verschiedenen Andeutungen sozusagen mit dem Feuer spielt, mit der Renationalisierung der Europäischen Union liebäugelt" (ARD Tagesthemen, May 24, 2016).

11 „Wir sind doch nicht dafür, dass die Le Pens dieser Welt uns regieren" (*Die Presse*, 18 May 2016).

12 Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz: German version, accessed on https://www.ris.bka.gv.at (6 July 2016).

13 Schulz-Kern-Treffen: Hofburg-Ergebnis „Niederlage für Euro-Skeptiker". *Kronen Zeitung*, 27 May 2016.

14 http://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20160702_OTS0027/hofer-in-oesterreich-eu-austrittsreferendum-wenn-eu-zentralistischer-wird, accessed on 6 July 2016.

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CHAPTER 9

Authoritarianism, Discourse and Social Media: Trump as the 'American Agitator'

Panayota Gounari

9.1. Introduction

In the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx citing Hegel famously writes that history repeats itself, 'first as tragedy, then as farce' (1972, 10). Donald Trump's ascent to power, as the forty-fifth President of the United States, in the most powerful post on earth, can be perceived as a moment in history when tragedy and farce overlap.

The farce aspect is obvious and is illustrated in the ongoing White House circus: Trump's demagoguery, oblivion, the blunt and effortless ignorance that he exudes in every context, his immeasurable narcissism and his sense of entitlement. The American public is slammed daily with fragments of his ignorance, often through his Twitter account that, nevertheless, exudes a sense of 'false familiarity.' Trump puts forth for his audience an 'act – something between a tragic recital and a clownish pantomime' (Löwenthal and Guterman 1949, 4).

While the 'farce' side might seem amusing, at times, where analyses focus on his gaffes, psychological instability, Twitter ranting and inability to carry out the smallest task as president, his administration is still delivering on his

campaign promises to 'make America great again': a mix of racism and white supremacy, corporatism, and militarization, to the degree that it is not an exaggeration to speak about the embodiment of a neofascist administration. It is Trump administration's discourse and policies that now openly legitimize a backlash on immigration (the Wall on the Mexico border, the travel bans, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids and deportations); a renewed nationalism and trade protectionism (America first, import restrictions); an attack on social welfare (his budget is distributing wealth upward, slashing social programs and dismantling any social safety nets); a form of Social Darwinism, and the most reactionary and violent policies in healthcare, education, and labour, that adversely affect the lives and existence of ordinary people. In Trump's world, the fittest and richest will survive.

The elite class in the United States and worldwide is having a field day. While Trump constantly makes a fool of himself, making 'House of Cards' a parody where art imitates life, a capitalist restoration is under way, giving even more power, wealth, and control to the top 1%. The American people voted the poster child of the capitalist system, a member of the elite, as anti-systemic, where the system, according to Trump, stands for the corrupt Washington professional politics. Trump is, according to *Forbes Magazine,* the 156th richest American (Forbes List 2016). His idea about politics is, according to Christian Fuchs (2017) 'to substitute the political elite by the economic elite so that the latter has direct influence on policy making' (4). Contrary to his public persona purporting to be the guy-next-door bringing to Washington a non-elitist people's politics (a classic presidential candidate narrative of the Republican Party), he is rather 'the illustration of how the capitalist class directly rules and dominates politics' (4).

It is important, therefore, to state upfront that Trump is only the symptom, but capitalism is still the disease. Politics, like everything else in the United States capitalist mecca, has a planned obsolescence and Trump seems to be the system's new wild card to maintain its hegemony that was recently shaken, as the onset of a global financial crisis had ripple effects even for the capitalist classes. The moment is not coincidental: as Max Horkheimer and Samuel Flowerman (1949) noted more than sixty-five years ago, in their introduction to the book *Prophets of Deceit*: 'demagogy makes its appearance whenever a democratic society is threatened with internal destruction [...] its function has always been [...] to lead the masses towards goals that run counter to their basic interests' (in Löwenthal and Guterman 1949, xi). Trump's rise to power is not disconnected from the general strengthening of the extreme right, and the rise of neofascist leaders worldwide, as a larger percentage of the population now lives in conditions of 'social malaise'[1] and experiences the consequences of immiseration capitalism.

In this chapter, I am discussing authoritarianism in the United States after Donald Trump's election, in order to create a context where I will address a shift in discourse and a normalization of racist, nationalistic and nativist narratives

in the public realm. I contend that what we are witnessing is not simply right-wing populism and its ensuing discourses but rather, a neofascist authoritarian turn. I discuss the function of social media, particularly Twitter, President Trump's favourite online platform, as an instrument of discourse production, reorientation and social control.

9.2. Authoritarianism 'U.S.-style'

'I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody. And I wouldn't lose any voters, OK. It's like incredible.'(Presidential candidate Donald Trump during a campaign rally in Iowa, 23 January 2016)

Leo Löwenthal and Norbert Guterman in their 1949 book *Prophets of Deceit: The Techniques of the American Agitator* sketched the portrait of the authoritarian populist 'agitator,' in a truly prophetic study; they described the 'unserious' populist who blurs ideological lines, exploiting the state of discontent, the 'social malaise' of working and middle classes; the 'prophet of deceit' who creates and demonizes the different 'Other', promoting conspiracy theories. The 'leader' who banks on an audience of 'dupes' – 'people who bear the world a grudge because they feel it has cheated them, and who are therefore insecure, dependent, and bewildered' (21). They ascertained that, at the time, agitators attracted small audiences and that some agitators 'have occasionally come fairly close to the national political scene' (4). Löwenthal and Guterman foresaw both the recent upsurge of neofascism, and the rise of populist leaders across the globe and, in a strange turn of fate, sketched Trump's rise to power some sixty-eight years later. The current rise of authoritarianism and neofascism in the United States and across the globe is not disconnected from the ways neoliberalism has failed humanity on multiple levels. And these developments need to be connected to 'the structural crisis of monopoly-finance capital – that is, to the regime of concentrated, financialized, and globalized capitalism' (Foster 2017). As Foster correctly points out, historically, like Italian and German fascism, neofascism arises from interrelated crises of capitalism and the liberal-democratic state, undermining the latter while seeking to shore up the former.' He insists that:

> like all movements in the fascist genus, neofascist ideology combines racist, nationalist, and culturalist myths with economic and political proposals aimed primarily at the lower-middle class (or petty bourgeoisie) in alliance with monopoly capital—while also seeking to integrate nationalistic working-class supporters and rural populations (2017).

Fascism and its authoritarian politics are bred and maintained by a violent economic structure, namely capitalism. Fascism at different historical moments

ensured that capitalist classes will maintain their power and control when eve-rything else had failed. As Curry Malott puts it, fascism is the system's wild card, 'the capitalist class' last resort to control or regain control of the bourgeois state and the working class when bourgeois, democratic channels no longer function in that capacity' (Malott 2017, 126).

The particular brand of U.S. authoritarianism is interesting because it at-tempts to make fascism relevant again, albeit in new conditions of capitalism. The following six features operate on both a material and a symbolic level:

1. *A high degree of concentration and centralization of economic and po-litical power*: Trump operates as a monarch, mostly trying to transfer powers of legislation and the judiciary to the executive power of the president. One does not need to look further than his disregard for the constitution and his forty-nine executive orders to this day (more than any other president in his first year, the last fifty years) that enabled him to circumvent Congress in order to pass unpopular legislation, his fights over federal judges, and his nominee for the Supreme Court.

2. *Doing politics through fear and terror while demonizing the different 'Other' and inciting racism.* This, in turn, brings more militarization and material and symbolic violence. The agitator/Trump presents the 'threatening chaos as unavoidable and inexorable' and through the ex-ploitation of the fear of this impending chaos, he 'succeeds in appear-ing as a radical who will have no truck with mere fragmentary reforms, while he simultaneously steers his adherents wide of any suggestion of a basic social reorganization' (Löwenthal and Guterman 1949, 34). The Trump/Breitbart campaign spoke to the fears and resentments of a deci-sive section of the lower-middle and working classes. The politics of fear 'instrumentalize some kind of ethnic/religious/linguistic/political mi-nority as a scapegoat for most if not all current woes and subsequently construe the respective group as dangerous and as a threat to "us", to our nation' (Wodak 2015, 2). Trump has created an 'enemy' category where he adds any group or individuals who threaten his political agenda. However, the image of the ostensible enemy is inflated out of all propor-tion to reality because 'what is at stake is rather the continued stability and growth of a system which is threatened by its own irrationality – by the narrow base on which its prosperity rests, by the dehumanization which its wasteful and parasitic affluence demands' (Marcuse 1967). The agitator creates a threat for every fear, much in the same way advanced capitalist societies create a need for every product. Those fears superim-posed upon the individual, aim at creating a state of repression where consolation will usually come in the form of more repression that will, in turn, ensure safety from harm. Thus, people become complicit with more repressive measures and surveillance, such as the curtailment of

civil liberties if their narrow interest regarding safety appears to be met by the unconstitutional measures (Gounari 2009). Despite the constant manufacturing of imaginary dangers and threats and their ensuing fears, there is a conscious effort to suppress real fears that would stem from the unavoidable connection between economic policies and their human consequences; that is, fears from the imposition of neoliberalism as a program destined to destroy the welfare state and those collective and state structures that safeguard and hold together a vibrant social net. Part of the agitator's work is to prevent his following from making these connections and from looking for structural changes.

3. *The creation of purposeful ideological confusion* in order 'to enlist mass support through racist and nativist appeals to lower-middle class insecurities, while allying with core elements of the ruling class' (Foster 2017). Trump needs both the support of the elite political circles and the corporate media possibly more than he needs the support of the people who voted for him. His appeals to traditionalism and classical American values aim at creating a homogenized common American imaginary: 'Make America Great Again!' The rebirth of American exceptionalism came with nativist and racist undertones since America has never been 'great' for Native Americans, African-Americans, Latinos, immigrants and other 'minorities,' women, and the poor.

4. *The emergence of the authoritarian leader*, who relies on personal politics as an individual brand, what Ruth Wodak calls 'personalization and commodification of current politics and politicians'. These 'leaders employ front stage performance techniques that are linked to popular celebrity culture' (Wodak 2015, 21). Trump, further, embodies many characteristics of the 'authoritarian personality,' (Adorno et al., 1950); power and 'toughness' are promoted as virtues while the binaries 'dominance–submission', 'strong-weak', 'leader-follower' are central in his persona and discourse. There is an overemphasis on the conventionalized attributes of the ego and an exaggerated assertion of strength and toughness. Despite all of the leader's material and symbolic power he still uses a narrative of victimhood for himself (as is, for instance, the case with Trump's treatment of the press). Finally, he demonstrates 'destructiveness and cynicism' manifested as generalized hostility and vilification of humans.

5. *The emergence of a propaganda machine* that distorts reality and historical facts, produces fake news stories, and is at war with intellectualism and scientific knowledge – what Wodak terms the 'arrogance of ignorance' (2015, 2). This includes the emergence of a network of media that support Trump and legitimize his existence, discourse and policies. The Trump spin machine[2] is particularly interesting because there is a degree of unapologetic bluntness that is constantly used. Spin as political

communication that shapes the way news are presented, disseminated and interpreted has changed the way media stories work. It is not important what one says, but rather how it is spun in the media. In the case of Trump, he the monarch, his mere institutional role legitimizes information and knowledge. The press that challenges him is wrong, everybody else is wrong, the president holds the ultimate Truth. Trump's Twitter platform plays an important role as an integral part of the current administration's spin machine. The systematic manipulation and control achieved through the propaganda machine aims to 'reconcile the individual with the mode of existence which his society imposes on him' (Marcuse, 1967).

All of the above characteristics usually develop in what Marcuse (1967) calls a 'sick society,' where 'surplus-repression,' is needed, in order to maintain the established social order. Such surplus-repression works to put additional strains and stresses on the individuals: 'In the contemporary affluent society, the discrepancy between the established modes of existence and the real possibilities of human freedom is so great that, in order to prevent an explosion, society has to insure a more effective mental coordination of individuals: in its unconscious as well as conscious dimensions, the psyche is opened up and subjected to systematic manipulation and control' (Marcuse 1967).

Researchers Marc Hetherington and Jonathan Weiler, in their attempt to understand popular support for authoritarian leaders, following Adorno et al. study on the authoritarian personality, had identified back in 2009 a revival in authoritarianism in the United States. In their book at the time, they concluded that the Republican Party, by positioning itself as the party of traditional values, law and order, had unknowingly attracted what would turn out to be a vast and previously bipartisan population of Americans with authoritarian tendencies (Hetherington and Weiler 2009; Taub 2016). These tendencies were ultimately expressed in the 2016 US election.

9.3. Doing Politics through Social Media: One-Dimensional Discourse

The use and proliferation of digital and social media has radically changed both the way we are using language and the way we are 'doing politics' these days. Virtual space has now become the 'natural habitat' of an increasing number of individuals around the world; a space where they engage in discussions, work, shop, bank, hangout, relax, vote, find love partners, conduct their day-to-day activities, and so forth. KhosraviNik and Unger stress that 'a large proportion of day-to-day verbal and visual communication has migrated to various participatory web platforms' (2016, 230). Social media have been hailed as either emancipatory tools contributing to a more participatory democracy, creating

instant awareness about different social issues, a new public space of sorts ('Arab Spring' and the 'Occupy' movement are two widely cited examples) or just another tool of control and containment, a 'profoundly depoliticizing' arena that fetishizes technology leading to a 'disavowal of a more fundamental political disempowerment or castration' (Dean 2005). Fuchs (2014) defines a public sphere in a Habermasian framework as a space of political communication and access to resources that allow citizens to participate in it. In this sense, given the exclusionary and commodified character of social media, they cannot be considered as public spheres nor should they raise our hopes that revolution will be tweeted. Fuchs insists that the web is dominated by corporations that accumulate capital by exploiting and commodifying users and this is why they can never be truly participatory (2014, 179–207).

One can realize the magnitude and impact of the medium if they consider that in the famous 'Russia meddling,' posts from a Russian company had reached the newsfeeds of 126 million users on Facebook during the 2016 US election and hundreds of thousands of bots posted political messages during the election on Twitter alone (Frier 2017).

Drawing on Marcuse's work on one-dimensional thought in advanced industrial societies, I want to look at social media as a new kind of symbolic 'machine', an effective political instrument that, in the context of advanced capitalism, both dehumanizes politics and struggles and absolves people from the guilt of inertia in the face of major social and economic crises. Marcuse notes that the road to inertia does not lead to an instinctual nirvana of satisfaction but 'it may well reduce the stress of intelligence, the pain and tension which accompany autonomous mental activity – thus it may be an effective aggression against the mind in its socially disturbing, critical functions' (Marcuse 1967).

'Effective aggression against the mind' is achieved through the fetishization of technology where 'autonomous mental activity' is severely inhibited. Social media, as tools for producing and consuming different kinds of texts in the context of 'communicative capitalism'[3] (Dean 2009) promote a *one-dimensional discourse*. Here I am particularly interested in the characteristics of Twitter's one-dimensional discourse:

Operationalism/Instrumentalism. Language used in Twitter is short, fragmented and decontextualized: it is a language that 'tends to express and promote the immediate identification of reason and fact, truth and established truth, essence and existence, the thing and its function' (Marcuse 1964, 85). This is a central characteristic of the 'closing of the universe of discourse' where language, neutralized and purged of its historical meanings and significations, is operationalized in the service of capitalist significations (Marcuse 1964). The content authored on Twitter promotes the development of meaning, as 'natural' and 'neutral.' Often language in fragments is used to talk about violence, conflict and struggle in the most innocent and non-threatening way. More importantly, this constructed neo-liberal-dominated universe of social media discourse closes itself against any other discourse that is not in its own terms.

Brian Ott in a recent article argues that Twitter demands simplicity, promotes impulsivity, and fosters incivility (Ott 2017).

Discourse as commodity. Social media as products of the capitalist culture industry, and illustrations of technological progress 'are deeply embedded in capitalism's commodity logic and therefore reflect individual private property, individualism and structures of exploitation and domination' (Fuchs 2016, 114). Digital media as tools of the capitalist imaginary 'are modes of reification and therefore expressions of instrumental/technological rationality' in that they 'reduce humans to the status of consumers of advertisements and commodities' while as cultural commodities they are 'produced by cultural wage-workers that are bought by consumers and audience commodities that the media consumers become themselves by being sold as an audience to capitalist media's advertising clients' (Fuchs 2016, 132). In addition, tweets are fragmented (Twitter has a limit of 104, recently increased to 280 characters) which further impoverishes language use and reduces human communication to 280 characters.

The self as a brand. Social media as cultural commodities articulate and produce familiar discourses that resonate with other products of the culture industry. Trump's tweets are an illustration of a 'politics of the self,' illustrative of a 'promotional culture' (Fairclough 1995) where language is simple yet pompous and flashy. At the same time, as the leader, he articulates a specific authoritarian discourse where we can identify the use of simple, impoverished language, the kind that Umberto Eco notes can be found in the Nazi or Fascist schoolbooks 'an impoverished vocabulary, and an elementary syntax, in order to limit the instruments for complex and critical reasoning' (Eco 1995). It is also interesting to note that Trump truly believes in the value and currency of his brand to the degree that after his inauguration, he continued using his personal Twitter account and not the official POTUS Twitter account.

Discourse of amusement. An additional layer of complexity is the fact that social media are marketed as entertainment – an entertainment that is accessible 24/7. The ideology behind this type of 'amusement' is hardly new. Facebook, Twitter and other sites serve as 'the prolongation of work. It is sought after as an escape from the mechanized work process, and to recruit strength in order to be able to cope with it again' (Horkheimer and Adorno 1994, 137). Horkheimer and Adorno insist that 'pleasure hardens into boredom because, if it is to remain pleasure, it must not demand any effort and therefore moves rigorously in the worn grooves of association. No independent thinking must be expected from the audience' (Horkheimer and Adorno 1994, 137). Adorno and Horkheimer's remarks point to the malady of our capitalist, mechanized, consumerist societies: involvement through inertia that creates a false sense of participation, security, homogeneity and consensus. Social media seem to be ideal platforms for a politics of inertia as one's networked contributions seem to matter when in fact, as Jodi Dean notes, '[u]nder conditions of intensive and

extensive proliferation of media, conditions wherein everyone is presumed to be a producer as well as a consumer of content, messages get lost. They become mere contributions to the circulation of images, opinion, and information, to the billions of nuggets of information and affect trying to catch and hold attention, to push or sway opinion, taste, and trends in one direction rather than another' (Dean 2009, 24).

Dehistoricization. An important aspect of the discourse produced in Twitter is the erasure of the historical context. While there is around-the-clock exposure, constant access, and immediacy (all content is immediately available for reading and commenting), the message is often decontextualized. The context is always that of-the-moment, limiting broader interpretations, connections and exploration of ramifications. Tweets have a planned obsolescence, as the next tweet will now draw even more attention, commentary, visibility, and currency. A tweet's history is the here and now, as an ongoing critique of reality. Technological rationality as embodied in the new digital technologies becomes the great vehicle of better domination, creating a truly totalitarian universe. In this universe meanings are contained, fragmented and dehistoricized.

It comes, then, as no surprise that social media have been serving as the ideal medium for populist parties and their leaders since they are marketed as 'non-hierarchical and democratic.' They constitute an alternative to the mainstream media, which many supporters of populist parties strongly distrust. The perception is that since we all contribute, 'the content is generated by us – the honest, hard-working, ordinary citizens – exactly those people who the populists are defending. Indeed, populist parties are far less likely to trust mainstream media sources than the typical citizen' (Bartlett cited in Kreis 2017, 4). Both the upsurge of right-wing populist parties, as well as the promotion of their respective agendas has been possible through the increased mediatization that, in turn, has been normalizing their narratives and messages (e.g., Wodak 2015a,b; Link 2014; Krzyżanowski 2013b; Forchtner et al. 2013; Mazzoleni 2008).

Political campaigns started using social media as early as fourteen years ago, but it was with Barack Obama's 2008 campaign that their use was taken to the next level. Montgomery (2017) notes that 'the public sphere of a presidential election amounts to a kind of discursive laboratory in which the words and sayings of candidates are recorded in detail, in which we also have much lay commentary and reaction regarding their import, and in which a fair amount is known about which section of the voting public found particular words and sayings persuasive' (1). Most political figures and organizations use social media platforms to disseminate their agendas and this has largely changed the way politics is conducted (Kreis 2017, Bartlett 2014). This is a time when politics is 'branded' through social media, as different pages give voice to ideas, ideologies and political agendas. However, if Marcuse is correct in claiming that '[p]olitical liberation would mean liberation of the individuals from politics over

which they have no effective control' it seems that social media have a firm grip on a large percentage of the world's population, while people, in turn, have no control over social media.

There is an important and valuable body of literature that explores the ways 'right-wing populist' discourse is articulated in European countries and, more recently, in the United States (Wodak 2015; Wodak and Krzyzanowski 2017; Reisigl 2013). Wodak & Krzyzanowski (2017) insist that there is a high degree of complexity and elusiveness in trying to define right-wing populism but they stick with the term and offer the following definition citing Betz and Immerfall (1998):

> a hybrid political ideology that rejects the hegemonic post-war political consensus and usually, though not always, combines laissez-faire liberalism and anti-elitism or other, often profoundly different and contradictory ideologies. This ideology is considered as populism because of its appeal to the 'common man/woman', as to a quasi-homogenous people, defined in an ethno-nationalist way (Betz and Immerfall 1998, 4–5 cited in Wodak and Krzyzanowski, 2017, 5).

Wodak (2015) further acknowledges that 'populist elements have always also appealed to and appeared in far-right authoritarian or fascist movements.' Many academic and popular articles have avoided using the term fascism or neofascism, opting instead for right-wing populism (RWP). Throughout this chapter, I have opted to use the term 'neofascist' and authoritarian to talk about the politics and discourse of the particular political formations. I believe that the choice of 'right-wing populism' (RWP) over 'neofascist/authoritarian' (NFA) misses the opportunity to name, not just the ideology behind these political formations, but also the material conditions, that is, the ways right-wing populist ideologies function as a superstructure vehicle for a fascist regime to strengthen the capitalist classes. Fascism has historically done this as accurately captured by Foster (2017):

> right-wing populism is a euphemism introduced into the European discussion in the last few decades to refer to movements in the 'fascist genus' (fascism/neofascism/post-fascism), characterized by virulently xenophobic, ultra-nationalist tendencies, rooted primarily in the lower-middle class and relatively privileged sections of the working class, in alliance with monopolistic capital. […] The same basic phenomenon has now triumphed in the United States, in the form of Trump's rise to chief executive (Foster 2017).

Nowhere is this more striking and evident than in the American phenomenon now termed Trumpism (Wodak 2017, 474).

9.4. Trump's Discourse

'I went to an Ivy League school. I'm very highly educated. I know words, I have the best words. I have the best, but there is no better word than stupid'

> (Republican Presidential Candidate Donald Trump,
> Rally in South Carolina, 12/30/2015)

The forty-fifth president of the United States is a standalone object of study on many levels. However, it is mostly his language use that has drawn fascination, confusion and interest. A good number of academic and popular media articles have already discussed his literacy skills, language level, vocabulary, stylistics, and rhetoric, among other aspects of his social media presence. There is, further, a body of literature that has been looking at populist discourse as it manifests in President Trump's output of different sorts including speeches, statements, interviews, tweets and so forth (Kreis 2017, Enli 2017, Montgomery 2017, Wodak 2017, Chilton 2017, Ott 2016). In this section, I will discuss his language use in Twitter and identify some patterns that support the idea that his tweet discourse embodies one-dimensional thought, operationalism, and neofascist/authoritarian traits.

Donald Trump has tweeted/retweeted 2,114 times since his January 2017 inauguration and until the moment these lines were written. According to Twitter stats, '@realDonaldTrump' is a casual user, with an average of 7–10 tweet(s) per day which is 'pretty consistent with a total of 36,368 since @realDonaldTrump joined in March 2009.' Trump's 'audience attentiveness score is 71%, which stems from being tracked on 79,504 Twitter lists and normalized to their 42,014,822 followers' (Twitter Counter, November 2017). Reading through President Trump's sea of tweets one cannot help but think of it as a 'harangue [that] may appear simply as the raving of a maniac' consistent with the image of a populist authoritarian leader (Löwenthal and Guterman, 4). Trump, however, uses Twitter as a strategic instrument of power politics (Kreis 2017) to sell his own authoritarian brand of politics.

Returning to the characteristics of US-style authoritarianism that I presented earlier, I will now identify some discursive themes found in Trump's tweeting. Data used in this section has been largely drawn from the online platform TrumpTwitterArchive (http://www.trumptwitterarchive.com), a searchable database of Trump tweets that updates in real time and lists some 32,451 tweets from his personal account. Tweets have been cross-referenced with Donald Trump's personal Twitter account (@realDonaldTrump).

Concentration of power/centralization of power. Discursively, Trump does this in an interesting way, tweeting more often in the first person singular (I am, I have, I can) rather than using the collective 'we.' He is the sole source of solutions, ideas and action. By presenting state affairs as broken objects that need

fixing, he instrumentalizes important social and political questions. Trump himself has espoused this instrumentalist dogma when he said that, '*America doesn't need more 'all-talk, no-action' politicians running things. It needs smart businesspeople who understand how to manage. We don't need more political rhetoric – we need more common sense. 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it' – but if it is broke, let's stop talking about it and fix it. I know how to fix it*' (cited in O'Brien, 2016).

During his election campaign, on 1 November 2015, Trump tweeted: '*Jeb's new slogan – 'Jeb can fix it'. I never thought of Jeb as a crook! Stupid message, the word 'fix' is not a good one to use in politics!*' ('@realDonaldTrump, Twitter 11/1/2015, 08:48:26 AM). This is after Trump himself had used the same slogan on Twitter some fifty times already. After this, he went on to use the word 'fix' in a similar context at least forty-eight more times. As seen in Table 1, Trump claims to be able to fix everything: America's problems in general, our great country; our broken education system, social security and Medicaid, Obamacare; our military; the economy, the debt; jobs, unemployment; ISIS/terrorism, immigration; Washington. Just name the issue and he will fix it.

This pragmatic approach to social issues is very much in line with the type of instrumentalism/operationalism the work of the Frankfurt School so strongly critiqued and epitomized in one-dimensional language. Operationalism, in theory and practice, becomes the theory and practice of containment (Marcuse 1964, 17) and, in turn, society becomes a static system of life. In the tweets above, 'the linguistic form militates against the development of meaning' (Marcuse 1964, 86) and what is lost are the complex and layered social relationships, the relations of production and the struggle over them. The use of simplistic language to talk about complex social issues where 'the concept is synonymous with the corresponding set of operations' (Marcuse 1964, 13) is an attempt to downplay the importance of these issues. How one chooses to talk about social problems shapes to a large degree the solution. Human relations are not engines to be fixed, unemployment is not a broken machine and the government is not a corporation.

'Doing politics' through fear. Löwenthal and Guterman use the term 'Charade of Doom' to talk about the agitator's technique of evoking catastrophe and producing fear among his audience. Trump has been on a crusade against the 'foreign' intruders as illustrated in the tweets about ISIS, the Mexico Wall, and terrorism. His alarmist tweets are characterized by destructiveness and cynicism*:* a generalized hostility, and the vilification of human beings, a typical characteristic of authoritarian aggression: the tendency to be on the lookout for, and to condemn, reject, and punish people who 'violate rules' and conventional values (for example, enter the country illegally). Playing with the identity of opposites 'in the mouth of the enemy, peace means war, and defense is attack, while on the righteous side, escalation is restraint, and saturation bombing prepares for peace. Organized in this discriminatory fashion, language designates

Date/Tweet
(1) May 13, 2015 TRAIN WRECK just the beginning. Our roads, airports, tunnels, bridges, electric grid - all falling apart. I can fix for 20% of pols, & better
(2) May 29, 2015 Wow, the economy is really bad! GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT down 0.7% in 1st. quarter - and getting worse. I TOLD YOU SO! Only I can fix.
(3) Jul 3, 2015 05:12:24 PM Our Southern border is unsecure. I am the only one that can fix it, nobody else has the guts to even talk about it.
(4) Jul 24, 2015 01:18:28 PM It is time to send someone from the outside to fix DC from the inside. Let's Make America Great Again!
(5) Dec 10, 2015 07:00:15 AM Our VISA system is broken, like so much else in our country. We better get it fixed really fast. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!
(6) Dec 25, 2015 03:15:25 PM We have many problems in our house (country!), and we need to fix them before we let visitors come over and stay. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!
(7) Dec 28, 2015 07:42:06 AM Many of the great jobs that the people of our country want are long gone, shipped to other countries. We now are part time, sad! I WILL FIX!
(8) Mar 24, 2016 10:52:11 AM Just announced that as many as 5000 ISIS fighters have infiltrated Europe. Also, many in U.S. I TOLD YOU SO! I alone can fix this problem!
(9) May 20, 2016 04:58:47 AM Look where the world is today, a total mess, and ISIS is still running around wild. I can fix it fast, Hillary has no chance!
(10) Jul 28, 2016 04:56:33 PM As President, I WILL fix this rigged system and only answer to YOU, the American people!
(11) Jul 25, 2016 10:04:56 PM Sad to watch Bernie Sanders abandon his revolution. We welcome all voters who want to fix our rigged system and bring back our jobs.
(12) Jul 1, 2016 08:29:25 PM When you can't say it - or see it—you can't fix it. We will MAKE AMERICA SAFE AGAIN! #ImWithYou #AmericaFirst https://t.co/Vd2A747L29 Jun 21, 2016
(13) 11:55:41 AM I am 'the king of debt' That has been great for me as a businessman, but is bad for the country. I made a fortune off of debt, will fix U.S.
(14) Jun 16, 2016 11:54:39 AM The trade deficit rose to a 7yr high thanks to horrible trade policies Clinton supports. I will fix it fast- JOBS!

Table 9.1

a priori the enemy as evil in his entirety and in all his actions and intentions'
(Marcuse 1967).

Trump's incoherent and contradictory utterances provoke and play on 'feelings of resentment and disdain intermingled with bits of fear, hatred and anger' (Kagan cited in Fuchs 2017, 33). His targets: 'Muslims, Hispanics, women,

Date/Tweet
(15) 12/17/2015 There is no question who will handle the threat of terrorism best as #POTUS. #Trump2016
(16) 6/28/2016 We must do everything possible to keep this horrible terrorism outside the United States.
(17) 10/20/2016 If elected POTUS - I will stop RADICAL ISLAMIC TERRORISM in this country! In order to do this, we need to #DrainTheSwamp!
(18) 2/4/2017 Because the ban was lifted by a judge, many very bad and dangerous people may be pouring into our country. A terrible decision
(19) 2/5/2017 Just cannot believe a judge would put our country in such peril. If something happens blame him and court system. People pouring in. Bad!
(20) 4/23/2017 The Democrats don't want money from budget going to border wall despite the fact that it will stop drugs and very bad MS 13 gang members.
(21) 4/24/2017 The Wall is a very important tool in stopping drugs from pouring into our country and poisoning our youth (and many others)! If . . . the wall is not built, which it will be, the drug situation will NEVER be fixed the way it should be! #BuildTheWall
(22) 2/9/16 We will stop heroin and other drugs from coming into New Hampshire from our open southern border. We will build a WALL and have security.
(23) 4/27/16 Heroin overdoses are taking over our children and others in the MIDWEST. Coming in from our southern border. We need strong border & WALL!
(24) 15/9/27 We have made more progress in the last nine months against ISIS than the Obama Administration has made in 8 years. Must be proactive & nasty!

Table 9.2

Chinese, Mexicans, Europeans, Arabs, immigrants, refugees [people with disability] – whom he depicts either as threats or as objects of derision' (Kagan cited in Fuchs 2017) as Table 2 illustrates.

The president is ready to circumvent the constitution in order to make his constructed enemies real. Enemies go through a dehumanization and demonization process that is discursively violent and aggressive: he has called gang members 'animals' in a speech to law enforcement officials in Long Island in July 2017 encouraging police to use violence. At the same time, Trump has a double standard when it comes to foreign and domestic terrorism: for white males committing crimes, he focuses more on the crime itself and the victims; for terrorist acts by non-whites, he focuses on the perpetrator with ad hominem attacks. His goal is to funnel fears towards a specific direction rather to protect people from any impending danger. His racist, white-supremacist ideology has emboldened extremist groups and increased physical violence against minorities in the USA.

Creating ideological confusion. Trump's use of 'I'm with you' hashtags in many of his tweets, implies that he is with the people. However, his alliances are certainly strange, particularly that with Alt-Right Breitbart. His tapping into Steve Bannon as a White House senior adviser, his reluctance to condemn the Ku Klux Klan or white supremacist violence in the Charlottesville rally (for which he gets congratulations from former KKK member David Duke), and his equation of Alt-Right white supremacists to anti-fascists, raise the inevitable question 'with who among the American people is he really?'

His central campaign slogan 'Make America Great Again' (that has its own hashtag on Twitter, #MAGA) creates a dystopian vision where the present is terrible, and social malaise imposes upon us a return to a glorious past, a return to tradition when America was great. Trump makes reference to the 'great American values' as an overarching value system shared by all Americans. While he is demonizing the rotten political system and claims to 'drain the swamp' in Washington, he is eliminating most federal regulations for businesses, privatizing education and healthcare, abolishing environmental protections, and reforming the tax system to benefit the rich. His #MAGA slogan is the epitome of ideological confusion as it clumps together people across the lines of class, race, gender, ethnicity, an imagined community of Americans under the umbrella of patriotism, most specifically the white European Anglo-patriotism. Nationhood and homeland is the utmost identity in his message, where class lines are erased. Trump is capitalizing on the 'growing sense of disillusionment with ideals, values, and institutions' and 'skillfully works on this disillusionment by simultaneously damning and praising the accepted ideologies. On the one hand, he likes to give the impression that like most other advocates of social change, he is against certain social conditions because they violate universally accepted values. On the other hand, he often concurs with and reinforces his audience's suspicion about those values' (Löwenthal and Guterman, 29). The word 'again' in his famous slogan creates an imaginary of a harmonious country once upon a time when, I guess African Americans were not sitting in the back of the bus or lynched, for instance.

Authoritarian Leader.

> 'My use of social media is not Presidential - it's MODERN DAY PRESIDENTIAL. Make America Great Again!' (Twitter 7/1/2017)

The ideological confusion is further strengthened by Trump's self-branded persona: he is the guy-next-door who happens to live in a gilded loft in Manhattan. The billionaire businessman in the expensive suit with the cheesy truck-driver red baseball cap with MAGA initials who claims that his experience in government stems from his own professional endeavours managing businesses. In his tweets, he creates a clear dichotomy between a 'crooked' politician and a

successful businessman and implies that running a country amounts to managing a corporation.

As Montgomery (2017) points out, Trump's campaign discourse rested ultimately upon a simple overriding claim to be a vernacular authentic voice of himself and at one and the same time to be the voice of the people (18). While belonging to the top 1% Trump managed to market himself as the 'embodiment of a particular version of the people' and thus laid claims to his authenticity and sincerity. As he declared at the end of his acceptance speech at the Republican convention 'My pledge reads, 'I'M WITH YOU – THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.' I am your voice' (Montgomery 2017, 18). He is the 'outside insider,' his claim to transparency lies with the fact that he has not been a politician and yet he is part of the capitalist elite that has maintained the same political system and taken advantage of it for as long as he lived. He employs an 'authentic style' which corroborates his constructed position of an outsider and legitimate representative of the people distancing himself from the establishment (Ott 2017): 'Even his username (@realDonaldTrump) indexes authenticity and closeness to the people because it supports his claim that his tweets come from the 'real' Donald Trump and are not sent by his staff … He thus leverages the technological and communicative affordances of Twitter (Kreis 2017).

Trump always tweets about himself and the things he does in the superlative. He presents himself as the victim of criticism and attacks, and likes to refer to his enemies as 'haters and losers.' He may have gone to an Ivy League school and claim that he has 'the best words' but an analysis of President Trump's tweets demonstrates that 'his language is simple and direct and his messages are succinct and polarizing, which is a common strategy of right-wing populist discourse. His use of capitalization and exclamations further reinforces his messages' (Ott 2017). Ott stresses that Trump's lexicon is simple, repetitious and 'relying heavily on monosyllabic words such as "good" or "bad" and "sad"' while 'he makes frequent use of exclamation points and all caps' (Ott 2017, 64).

Date/Tweet
(25) 5/8/2013 Sorry losers and haters, but my I.Q. is one of the highest -and you all know it! Please don't feel so stupid or insecure, it's not your fault
(26) 7/21/2014 'Many people have said I'm the world's greatest writer of 140 character sentences.'
(27) 3/23/2016 'I will be the best by far in fighting terror'
(28) 1/23/2016 'I will be the greatest job-producing president in American history'
(29) 5/13/2015 'I am the BEST builder, just look at what I've built'
(30) 9/20/2015 'I am attracting the biggest crowds, by far, and the best poll numbers, also by far.'
(31) 6/11/2016 'I am least racist person there is'

Table 9.3

'His particular communication style and his use of a participatory web platform as a major tool of communication further index how he views himself in relation to the people: the leader who, on the one hand, returned sovereignty to the people and, on the other hand, protects the nation and homeland from the dangerous "Other"' (Kreis 2017, 9).

Propaganda Machine.

'The Press is the Enemy', Richard Nixon, 1972

Trump's Tweets are overwhelmingly negative and insulting. Failing to offer any incentives for meaningful dialogue, his communications are meant to do exactly the opposite: to shut down any discussion and promote his ideas and thoughts as the Truth. Trump's assault of independent journalism and free press amounts to a neofascist stance where journalism is the enemy of his regime. Trump has been a champion of insults; his list of people and situations he has attacked and degraded is very long. As a matter of fact, the *New York Times* have been keeping a detailed list of 'The 389 People, Places and Things Donald Trump has insulted on Twitter.' His lexical choices include words like 'moron' (52 times), 'haters and losers' (64 times), 'pathetic' (72 times), 'dope or dopey' (117 times), 'stupid' (183 times), 'clown' (45 times), 'crooked' (304 times) and others.

Since becoming president, Trump has often used Twitter as his own private spin room, shaping developing stories and discrediting mainstream media outlets. His 'fake news' construct has taken spin to a whole new level as he has used it so far more than 120 times. His attack on the press includes discrediting news media as well as personal attacks on journalists. He has over 300 tweets since 20 April 2015 attacking the press and insulting journalists. His lexical choices for insulting the press include 'totally biased,' 'fake news,' 'such dishonesty,' 'low rated,' 'poorly rated,' 'one-sided coverage,' getting to the point of even threatening news outlets for not providing favourable coverage: 'Network news has become so partisan, distorted and fake that licenses must be challenged and, if appropriate, revoked. Not fair to public!' (Twitter 11 October 2017). The insinuation that federal authority could be used to restrict freedom of press is beyond dangerous and raises important questions about this administration's character and ideology. In Table 4 there are some representative tweets from his war with the press:

9.5. Conclusion

Trump's brand of authoritarian, corporate capitalism has a large dissemination platform and is further carried via his out-of-control Twitter account, rallies and press conferences and, of course, through his proxies and mouthpieces in friendly media networks and opinion shaping outlets. Mass culture and digital media play mostly a fundamental anti-pedagogical role: instead of producing

Date/Tweet
(32) The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People!February 17 at 4:48 PM
(33) The fake news media is going crazy with their conspiracy theories and blind hatred. @MSNBC & @CNN are unwatchable. @foxandfriends is great! February 15 at 6:40 AM (34) No matter how much I accomplish during the ridiculous standard of the first 100 days, & it has been a lot (including S.C.), media will kill! April 21 at 6:50 AM (35) The Fake Media (not Real Media) has gotten even worse since the election. Every story is badly slanted. We have to hold them to the truth! April 17 at 8:17 AM (36) If the people of our great country could only see how viciously and inaccurately my administration is covered by certain media! March 29 at 7:21 AM (37) FAKE NEWS media knowingly doesn't tell the truth. A great danger to our country. The failing @nytimes has become a joke. Likewise @CNN. Sad! February 24 at 10:09 PM

Table 9.4

critical analyses and interventions in the public sphere, these sites of public pedagogy 'have become the organizing force of neoliberal ideology. […] Such sites operate within a wide variety of social institutions and formats' (Giroux, 2010, 487). These new sites of anti-pedagogy have the force not just to counter knowledge, but to produce and legitimize new knowledge. Twitter and other social media create the illusion of active participation when in fact, what is mostly happening is a closing of the universe of discourse and independent thought. In the context of 'communicative capitalism,' Dean poignantly notes that '[c]ontestations today rarely employ common terms, points of reference, or demarcated frontiers. In our highly mediated communications environments we confront instead a multiplication of resistances and assertions so extensive as to hinder the formation of strong counter hegemonies. The proliferation, distribution, acceleration, and intensification of communicative access and opportunity result in a deadlocked democracy incapable of serving as a form for political change' (Dean 2009, 22).

The rising authoritarianism and the legitimation of its discursive and material aspects by the United States president creates a fertile ground for a dangerous situation where, in the end, history will repeat itself as tragedy.

Notes

[1] 'Social malaise' is a term used in Löwenthal and Guterman.

² For a detailed discussion on the history and evolution of 'spin' see Leighton Andrews. 2006. 'Spin: From Tactic to Tabloid.' *Journal of Public Affairs,* 6: 31–45.

³ Dean defines communicative capitalism, as the 'materialization of ideals of inclusion and participation in information, entertainment, and communication technologies in ways that capture resistance and intensify global capitalism' (Dean 2009, 2).

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CHAPTER 10

Phantasmagoria and the Trump Opera

Forrest Muelrath

It should now be self-evident that internet technologies are not going to usher in a new Renaissance, end ignorance, or whatever other fantasies optimists may have attached to the idea of the Global Village. The essence of technology remains the same as it has since industrialization first began. In the wake of the 2016 US Presidential Election, the challenge of image projection technology (i.e., television or any internet gadget and the software that powers it) – the way in which it represents the world, and the influence it has on our perception of the real – has once again become an issue similar to the challenge addressed in Plato's Cave: the challenge of illusions projected over the real.

   In this chapter, to examine the way our present reality is altered by a specific technology in the present communications environment, I identify dangerous molecules of image projection apparatuses, and relate them to the pre-twentieth century theatre of phantasmagoria which maintained popularity across Europe and the United States for more than two centuries before the advent of cinema. Phantasmagoria became a metaphor used originally by Marx, and later by Walter Benjamin and T.W. Adorno, to address matters of consumer culture and illusion. Overlaying Adorno's analysis of the phantasmagoria found in Wagnerian music dramas onto the social media eco-system that gave rise to Trump, I find similarities of affect in the elemental particles unique to each spectacle. In other words, the feelings one gets from following the rise of authoritarian populists through social media feeds (such as Trump's) is similar

to feelings one might experience while in the audience of Wagner's *Die Ring des Nibelungen*, *Parsifal*, *Tristan,* and so on – artistic creations noted by philosophers such as Nietzsche and Adorno to be full of narcissism, trickery and deceit, which enraptures audience members by making Others out of them and taking over the body with the physical sensations generated by theatre, illusion, and music. I present here a structure for understanding the collective psychosis of social media phantasmagorias in the time of Trump, such as the Pizzagate conspiracy theory and the gun-violence that resulted from it. Because of the relative obscurity of both opera and the pre-cinema 'theatre of phantasmagoria,' I will begin by explaining both.

10.1. The Magic Lantern

The etymology of 'phantasmagoria' relates back to an obsolete type of theatre based around the pre-cinema image projection apparatus known as a 'magic lantern.' Therefore, before proceeding to an understanding of Adorno and Benjamin's use of 'phantasmagoria,' and how the concept remains relevant as technology progresses, some history of pre-cinema image projection apparatuses must be laid-out.

For two millennia or more the entire human understanding of projected images consisted of a natural phenomenon that occurs when light passes through a pin sized hole into a darkened area and forms an upside-down image on an opposing surface, known as 'camera obscura.' This phenomenon was registered in writing as early as Aristotle's *Problemata* (350BC), where the author notes that rays of sun passing through wickerwork form circles of light rather than rectangles (Book XV, 463). There was little technology developed around image projection until the sixteenth century when a biconvex lens was placed in front of the camera obscura's aperture, which allowed for the projection of a more distinct image – albeit still upside-down – on an opposing wall. This effect was typically achieved in a darkened room with a tiny hole in one wall, and on the opposite wall an image of the outside world would appear.

A lens attached to the camera obscura's aperture marks the beginning of the industrialization of image projection. Within a century, the magic lantern was invented by Dutch scientist, Christiaan Huygens, and its popularity lasted until the advent of cinema (Mannoni and Crangle 2015). Of all image projection apparatuses yet invented, the magic lantern has thus far sustained popularity longer than any other, and it is the true predecessor of film projectors found in present day movie houses.

A box constructed of sheet metal or wood, housing a gas lantern with a set of mirrors and lenses designed to send images outward, the magic lantern is able to project moving images of painted slides on to a screen. Two or three lenses are often stacked on top of one another, which allows for a background to be

projected with moving images superimposed. Animation of the images became possible with technological advances.

As foreign as the magic lantern might seem to us in the digital age, the essence of image projection remains the same since the industrialization of the apparatus began. The desire to project images on a screen, and the way audiences are affected does not change, and even the warp and woof of narrative content remains relatively stable. What does change are the mechanics of this technology – from sunlight through a hole in the wall, to virtual reality headsets and beyond. The progression of mechanics must not complicate our basic relationship to image projection technology, as it moves forward at greater and greater speeds with no sign that this progression will be hindered on the marketplace. We exist in relation to the image projection apparatus' mechanical progression from now into the unforeseeable future.

At the time of its invention in the mid-seventeenth century, many spectators would have been baffled by the images projected on the wall by magic lanterns, and those not in the know would have likely been spooked thinking that they were witnessing a supernatural event. For maximum effect, the apparatus was often hidden from view, and the content of the spectacle often consisted of diabolical and erotic imagery. When more complex theatre was developed around the magic lantern that involved music, actors, and sound effects to go along with the image projections, it was given the name 'phantasmagoria' – from the Greek *phantasma* meaning 'image, phantom, apparition,' and *agora* meaning 'assembly': an assembly of phantoms (Mannoni and Crangle 2015). Or if we would like to consider phantasmagoria from a contemporary psychoanalytic perspective, we could think of it as an assembly of phantasms – an assembly of perceptual patterns that will inevitably inform the subject's worldview.

10.2. Phantasmagoria

Phantasmagoria is where image projection intersects with Critical Theory. When Benjamin and Adorno use the term – as they do at several key points[1] – they are referring to a passage from Karl Marx's *Capital* (1867/1976). Marx uses the term as metaphor when discussing social relationships around the production of the 'mysterious character of the commodity form' in the first chapter of *Capital,* 'The Commodity' (163). According to Marx, as materials are produced into commodities they take on 'supra-sensible' characteristics related to the social aspects of labour, and the market value of the object is further distanced from the use value of the original material–wood to wooden table for instance, the table imbued with a mysterious character beyond the original material. Marx relates this separation to a trick of the eye, 'the phantasmagoric form of a relation of things.'[2] Phantasmagoria – a hallucinatory state that puts stress on the human brain, nerves, muscles and sense organs – is where a fetish

attaches itself to the products of labour, with the true value of that labour occluded from the subject.

Walter Benjamin relied on the phantasmagoria metaphor heavily in his *Arcade's Project*: 'Our investigation proposes to show how … the new forms of behaviour and the new economically and technologically based creations that we owe to the nineteenth century enter the universe of a phantasmagoria,' he writes in the *Arcades Project* introduction (Benjamin 2013, 14). Benjamin develops the metaphor to a place all on its own, fusing the Marxist elements with a Freudian reading of nineteenth-century commercialization. For him, all of Paris in the nineteenth century is a phantasmagoria, the *flâneur* is carried from one commodity to the next, in a never-ending dream-like state. An analogy could be drawn to today's typical internet user clicking through webpages.

Benjamin cites his interlocutor T.W. Adorno at several points in his discussion of phantasmagoria: e.g. (phantasmagoria is) 'a consumer item in which there is no longer anything that is supposed to remind us how it came into being. It becomes a magical object, insofar as the labor stored up in it comes to seem supernatural and sacred at the very moment when it can no longer be recognized as labor' (669).[3]

Adorno returned to phantasmagoria at several points throughout his writing life, but it is in an essay on the performance of Wagner's operas in late nineteenth century Bayreuth that his thoughts most relate to the present day communications environment. Here Adorno describes how the occultation of labour allows Wagner's characters to function 'as universal symbols' dissolving into the phantasmagorical mist created by the production. The influence of Wagnerian opera on the audience relates symbolically, psychically and physiologically to techniques used in the rise of Trump and other authoritarian populists working on social media.

10.3. Wagner

It is amusing to imagine Nietzsche in the last two years of his writing life, tortured by the physiological effects of Wagner's operas. 'How terribly Wagnerian orchestration affects me!' Nietzsche writes in *The Case of Wagner*, 'A disagreeable sweat breaks out all over me. All my fine weather vanishes' (Nietzsche 1964, 8). Bela Tarr's excellent film, *The Turin Horse*, brings in part this little narrative to life: the philosopher finishes his final completed essay, a promulgation against Wagner titled *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, penning the lines 'But do not my stomach, my heart, my circulation also protest? Are not my intestines also trouble?' (Nietzsche 1964, 59). And then walking out into the street he sees a stranger beating a horse – the last pummelling the philosopher's senses could bear before collapsing on the ground never to recover his sanity.

Nietzsche's 'physiology of art' – an attempt to analyse aesthetics by their influence on biology – was never fully developed, and for the most part has been

ignored by those who have followed him – for instance, Heidegger labelled such attempts a 'fatal misunderstanding' (Heidegger 1981, 127). In the digital world, where smartphone and internet addiction are increasingly talked about, the influence aesthetics have on our physiology are perhaps more relevant than they were in the early twentieth century. This can be evidenced by the increasing amount of psychological research that has gone into internet and smart phone addiction over the past five years (Walton 2017).

New multimedia spectacle targets audiences using data collection and algorithms, feeding content that, shock, amuse, or please a specific user's sensibilities. These methods are often occluded – besides the fact that many of us are aware that our online activities are being influenced by algorithms, most ignore it, clicking through a series of mildly affecting pages, while being unconsciously influenced by those who are tracking our activity. The occultation of production is something the digital world excels at, which is one essential link between the image projection apparatuses of the digital world, and that of phantasmagoria's magic lantern.

In his book on Wagner, Adorno opens his essay titled 'Phantasmagoria' by stating: 'The occultation of production by means of the outward appearance of the product – that is the formal law governing the works of Richard Wagner' (Adorno 2009, 74). The English translator of *In Search of Wagner*, Rodney Livingston, makes a note here, linking Adorno's usage of 'phantasmagoria' back to the commodity chapter in Marx's *Capital Volume 1*, writing, 'In this chapter, [phantasmagoria's] negative connotations stem from Marx's use of the word to describe commodity fetishism' (74). With Wagner the phantasmagoria also takes flight into territory that Marx barely touched upon but did allude to in the first chapter of *Capital 1* – 'into the misty realm of religion.' Or to borrow Marx's phrasing in the opening lines of the section titled 'The Fetishism of the Commodity and its Secret': 'metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties.'

In the context of Wagner, this misty realm of religion is manifest in the larger than life characters that populate his operas. Sometimes these characters represent actual religion, like with the Norse gods of the *Ring Cycle*, or in historical fiction like the *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. For the audience, in both cases the affect is similar – a character comes to life on stage that is relatable beyond the normal comprehension of space and time, a psychological and emotional effect that, if achieved to the artist's full desire, has the ability to overtake the body and replace one's own feelings, thoughts and memories, with that of the composer's. This is the goal of '*gesamtkunstwerk*' – a word Wagner used to describe his desire for a total work of art that affects all of the senses.

Adorno writes that 'The only reason why Wagner's characters can function as universal symbols, is that they dissolve in phantasmagoria like the mist' (78). He details many tricks that Wagner used to create phantasmagoria, in music, drama and scenery:

> Brünnhilde too is detached from time, sleeping like Kundry, in the abruptly invoked phantasmagoria of the magic fire – the dominant

phantasmagoria of the *Ring* and the one from which, musically, the image of the twilight of the Gods is ultimately derived. While the manner of its production is completely concealed in its string sections, harmonically, its progression is most ingeniously that of a state of rest. Not only do the constant harmonic changes produce new progressions; at the same time, systematic modulation through the changing surfaces of the different keys makes the music dance round the basic harmonies which remain constant at any given moment, like a fire that perpetually flickers without ever moving from the spot. As a metaphor for fire, the final 60 bars of *The Valkyrie* provide crucial insight into the nature of phantasmagoria (78).

For Adorno, the elements of Wagner's phantasmagorias are functioning on many levels at the same time; the concealment of harmonic progression in an alluring string section, for example, is not often going to be considered by the audience when accompanied by Wagnerian drama on the stage:

> The absence of any real harmonic progression becomes the phantasmagorical emblem for time standing still. Tannhäuser says in the *Venusberg*:
>
> > *The time I dwell here with thee, by days I cannot measure, seasons pass me, how, I scarcely know,*
> > *— the radiant sun I see no longer, strange hath become the heaven's starry splendor —*
> > *the sweet verdure of spring, the gentle token of earths renewing life.*
>
> The standing-still of time and the complete occultation of nature by means of phantasmagoria are thus brought together in the memory of a pristine age where time is guaranteed only by the stars. Time is the all-important element of production that phantasmagoria, the mirage of eternity, obscures. (71)[4]

With the drama and the music functioning in tandem with one another, the psychosexual grinds on the unconscious, at times in ways not even realized by the libretto's author:

> In a regression familiar from the process of bourgeois education and known to psychoanalysis as 'syphilophobia', sex and sexual disease become identical. It is no accident that one of Wagner's objections to vivisection was that the knowledge gleaned from such experimentation might lead to the curing of diseases that had been contracted through 'vice.' The conversion of pleasure into sickness is the denunciatory task

of phantasmagoria. If two of the Wagnerian phantasmagorias, the *Venusberg* and Klingsor's enchanted garden, are reminiscent of dreamland brothels, these are simultaneously calumniated as places that no one can leave unscathed. (83)

Psychosexual transgressions are of course a major element in the overall effect of Trump and other aspiring authoritarian populists in the contemporary American movement, with the 'grab 'em by the pussy' type of scenes, and the seemingly endless accusations of sexual misconduct – events, as with Wagner, likely to further enrapture audiences while ironically offering a position of moral authority even while promoting debased or erotic material.

Related to Marx's ocular metaphor, with the concealment of the opera's labour, the audience's subjectivity is reflected in the fantasy of what is at work in the production – enraptured by the stage drama, feeling the music, unconsciously processing the sexual – none of the operatics requiring a level of virtuosity that the average opera fan cannot fantasize performing herself. It is in the amalgam of fantasies about the production of opera, and fantasies caused by the opera's affect, that phantasmagoria takes hold. Adorno explains it in terms of dreams:

> The phantasmagoria tends towards dream not merely as the deluded wish-fulfillment of would-be buyers, but chiefly to conceal the labour that has gone into making it. It mirrors subjectivity by confronting the subject with the product of its own labour, but in such a way that the labour that has gone into it is no longer identifiable. The dreamer encounters his own image impotently, as if it were a miracle, and is held fast in the inexorable circle of his own labour, as if it would last forever. The object that he has forgotten he has made is dangled magically before his eyes, as if it were an absolutely objective manifestation. (80)

Likewise, Trump's character is able to function in the media in an abusive, authoritarian manner beyond normalcy when phantasmagoria is created by an occultation of production – social media's phantasmagoria. Through these new operatics, Trump becomes representative of the 'collectively, monstrously enlarged projection of the impotent ego of each' audience member witnessing his social media opera (Adorno and Horkheimer 1947/2016, 196).

To those of us on the Left, watching from a supposed enlightened perspective, the Trump character comes crashing clumsily onto the stage, unaware of his own follies and narcissism. He is a character akin to perhaps Wotan in *Der Ring des Nibelungen* – the king of the gods who coerces and dominates those around him, using a magical law-making spear to retain power. In the end, Wotan entangles himself in his own deceptive plots, his spear is unwittingly shattered by his mortal grandson, and the gods meet their demise as Valhalla is

consumed by flames. From a supposed enlightened position – with Trump in the role of a buffoonish leader to the last generation of his kind – it is relieving to imagine the king's reign coming to end as he is met with a fire as destructive as the one that annihilated the Hall of the Gods. It is self-evident that many liberals in America are watching the Robert Mueller investigative probe into Russian interference of the 2016 election, imagining that it will bring a fire that could destroy Valhalla. The destructive desire (the Freudian *Todestrieb*) is common in opera as well as fascism as made evident by Klaus Theweleit's (1987) and in Trumpian populism. However, the hope that Trump's rise will meet a fiery end is only the perspective of the enlightened crowd sitting in the opera's audience. Being that the rise of Trump is occurring within the hallowed American electoral system, more positions than the enlightened one need to be considered before we can come to terms with how those on the Left have been hornswoggled into participating in a system that elected an aspiring authoritarian, despite a supposed pedagogy.

Any of us who follow the Trump opera, whether the Trumpian character represents hero or villain, has been captured in the phantasmagoria in one of three positions, which I borrow from media theorist, Tom Gunning, and his lucid analysis of phantasmagoria and early cinema: (1) *the pedagogical and enlightened*, (2) *the faithful and authoritarian*, and (3) *the magician-illusionist*. To understand those three positions we can imagine a darkened room in the early nineteenth Century.

10.4. Optical Illusions

An audience gathers to witness a new type of theatre that promises 'astonishing appearances by […] optical and mechanical illusions […] PHANTOMS or APPARITIONS of the DEAD […] in a way more completely illusive than has ever been offered in the eye of the public theatre.'[5] The audience sits in anticipation as ethereal music begins to play on a glass harmonica, an actor screams offstage, and an image of a shadowy figure appears on the wall – a demon growing inexplicably larger, as if it is approaching through a portal that is opened up in the wall. Some in the audience will be familiar with phantasmagorias and have expected the illusion. Others will be completely in the dark, left gasping and screaming with fear, likely to the amusement of those experienced with the phantasmagoric effects.

As Tom Gunning points out, the magic lantern came into existence near the beginning of the Age of Enlightenment, and one of its selling points was its ability to function as a sort of philosophical toy, aiding in contemplation of illusions. Early in its existence during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, some practitioners may have been able to sell their magic lantern shows as ghost-raising séances, but by the nineteenth century popular phantasmagorias needed to appeal to audience with more scientific awareness. As is

evident in the advertisement quoted above, the practitioner was often forthcoming with the fact that the spectacle was created by 'optical and mechanical illusions.'

Gunning structures three different *receptions*, *practices* and *understandings* surrounding visual illusions in the post-Enlightenment era. If applied to our phantasmagoria metaphor concerning social media, this structure is useful for understanding the reception of illusions of the image projection apparatuses that we use today. Here are Gunning's three categories paraphrased (Gunning 2004, 40):

1. The *pedagogical and enlightened* explain the mechanisms of the illusion. Thus the illusion itself is dissolved in favour of its explanatory function about the nature of perception and light.
2. The *faithful and authoritarian* demonstrate not so much the working of perception as its inherent fallibility, the untrustworthy nature of human senses and consciousness in need of a transcendent faith to make sense of the world.
3. The *magician-illusionist* invokes neither faith nor science, but entertainment. The magician would announce that the illusion was not dependent on supernatural forces, and could be explained in terms of natural forces. However, unlike the Enlightenment pedagogue, the magician withholds the explanation, and delivers no debunking demonstration. Instead, he or she leaves spectators suspended in their uncertainty, doubting what they have just seen yet unable to deny or thoroughly explain it. In this suspense dwells the entertaining pleasure of uncertainty and ambiguity.

Each of the three categories lends itself to phantasmagoria's affect. Neither a pedagogic exposé of the mechanism, nor a transcendent faith inhibits the subject's fantasizes about the spectacle – this should be evident by the way many endure a physiological responses brought on by the stresses of fear and anxiety while watching a horror film, even after being exposed to the techniques of special effects artists. Gunning writes, 'Optical illusions form a complex figure, whose power may not lie primarily in the ability to fool someone into taking them for "reality". Rather they confound habitual attitudes towards perception, indeed sowing doubts about the nature of reality' (Gunning 2004, 40). I would add that having the three structures functioning within the audience at the same time, lends itself to the subject's further confusion about objective reality, and we should expect that he or she may be inclined towards any of the three positions at various points.

In understanding the phantasmagorias of Trump, we should consider for a moment the way the image projection apparatus has evolved. Today our image projection apparatuses consist of an amorphous set of what philosopher Villem Flusser would call 'automatic machines' – apparatuses that obey an arbitrary

program (Flusser 2014, 83). Arbitrary programs dominate the average user's digital life – these manifest as things like camera phones, spell check software, the numerous rules governing each social media platform, and so on. Automatic machines have made it easier for all people to create spectacle at the sort of pitch of Wagnerian drama with just a few taps on their cell phone. And each one of these programs creates a further occultation of labour. Flusser's makes the following prophetic observation in his 1983 book *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*: 'human labor is being replaced by automatic machines and most of society is starting to be employed in the "tertiary sector," i.e., playing with empty symbols; the existential interests of the material world are being replaced by symbolic universes and the values of things are being replaced by information. Our thoughts, feelings, desires and actions are being robotized; "life" is coming to mean feeding apparatuses and being fed by them' (79).

The operatic tools available for the populist social media campaign are numerous – perhaps infinite given the way the speed of development has surpassed the speed of user adaptation in the last two decades. For example, everything from the development of blogging platforms that allow fresh ways to excite participants, to the way data is collected and algorithms are manipulated by campaigns or third-party actors, can be used as tools to raise the tenor of the otherwise mundane process of electoral progress up to the fever-pitch of high operatic drama needed to ignite the type of zealous fanaticism that can support a character like Trump. In addition, the 'monstrously enlarged projection of the impotent ego of each individual' is aided by independent supporters, as well as detractors, firing off automatic machines all hours of the day.

10.5.   Fake News

Let us home in on a single operatic technique used in the Trump opera, occupying the pedagogical and enlightened position in today's phantasmagoria by examining journalism.

The occultation of labour, brought on by the automatic machines of digital publishing, left newsreaders with a harrowing disconnect between the impression made by a news article on the optic nerve, and the material essence of that article outside the eye.[6] In traditional news sources, the resources and labour that went into production were clearer. With the advent of digital publishing in the last decade, much of the labour that went into the production of the newspaper was suddenly occluded as the newspaper digitalized. Now the creation of news source in the digital age – such as Breitbart, Buzzfeed, or InfoWars – can access many of the same media tools at extremely low-costs, that are being used by traditional news sources, such as the *New York Times* or broadcast television. The labour that previously went into the production of traditional news sources was once specialized, but it has since become generic. The labour that previously went into printing newspapers or shooting live TV now largely takes

place in tech industries, or in mineral mines from which the materials used to build gadgets are extracted.

Sociologist Christian Fuchs, in his extensive Marxian analysis of digital media, defines the term *digital labour*: 'Digital labour is alienated digital work: it is alienated from itself, from the instruments and objects of labour and from the products of labour' (Fuchs 2014, 351). In these terms, in today's media landscape the newspaper, and in turn journalists, are now beholden to corporate social media companies. What news items get consumed is now largely dependent on either 1) the algorithms of social media sites such as Facebook, which dictate what is shown based on formulas that maximize potential benefits for social media corporations in user engagement and advertising; or 2) through the 'slave labourers' of the social media companies – essentially any user who generates and shares content which engages other users. The result of this is pressure to create content that will travel further and generate more impressions or 'clicks,' and in turn, ad revenue. News organizations are forced to comply with these new methods of circulation in attempt to meet the demands of the social media corporations.

Meanwhile, new competition – such as the authoritarian populist pro-Trump propaganda blog Breitbart – excels at meeting the demands of the new market, by producing content that has the external appearance of traditional journalism, but in reality is nothing more than political rabble-rousing tailored to reach the widest audience of right-wing new consumers. What is frightening is that in less than a decade Breitbart has managed to come in direct competition with news sources that practise actual journalism. Breitbart has achieved this by employing a number of illusory techniques, such as blog comments generated by bots, as well as bots spreading Breitbart articles through social media, motivated by an ideology based on a dogmatic belief in a fallacious historical analysis which informs that in order to return to a Post-WWII conservative culture in the United States, a crisis must be brought on by a destructive global leader. This historical analysis is laid out in Steve Bannon's idiotic film, *The Fourth Turning*.

With the compounded alienation of the labour of journalism that has come about with digitization comes an opening for swarms of reports that adopt the appearance of actual journalism and appear to represent actual events, but are, in fact, propaganda. This occurs not only in the creation of the content on right-wing fake news sites, but also across social platforms that spread the content, often through bots that are funded by associates of Bannon and Trump. The concealment of labour occurring everywhere from the mineral mines of gadget companies, to the software developers that create programs to replace copyeditors and other traditional jobs in the publishing industry, has enabled propagandists to produce a commodity with affect and optics similar to traditional journalism. Here, the phantasmagoria in Marx's metaphor comes very close to the theatre of phantasmagoria, in that actual visual illusions are being created by illusionists and alienated labourers in order to fool an audience.

Many of those who consume news do not think of this economic shift when engaged with the content, and the propagandists and conspiracy theorists retain some of the authority that traditional news sources spent a century accumulating under much different conditions of production and circulation. The ultimate end of the shift away from traditional newspaper or television production has thus far been the phenomenon of 'fake news' – items made to look like actual journalism and circulated by automatic machines. Fake news is a paramount example of a Trump phantasmagoria.

At the time of this writing there has been no pedagogical institution appropriated to dispel the illusion of fake news – we do not yet know if Trump contributed to the production of fake news that helped his campaign succeed, for instance, because we do not have the ability to perceive a truth one way or the other with the naked eye. This journalistic phantasmagoria, in fact, encourages limitless fantasies of what may be behind the production of fake news, which opportunists are using to their advantage in the discrediting of opponents.

10.5.1. Pizzagate

Using a specific instance of fake news – a horror scene in the Trump opera that managed to tear itself out of the digital world and into real life – we can apply Tom Gunning's three categories of reception, practice, and understanding of phantasmagoria.

The Pizzagate conspiracy reached its zenith when a man who believed in the illusion walked into the Washington, DC, Comet Ping Pong pizzeria with an assault rifle and fired shots. The Pizzagate conspiracy theory, which spread online in the run-up to the 2016 Election, claimed that Hillary Clinton and other Democrats participated in an international paedophiliac human trafficking ring that operated out of the pizza shop. This rumour began on a single Twitter account – the operator of which is unknown. The Twitter user claimed in a tweet that the NYPD was looking into evidence that Democrats, including Clinton, were involved in an international sex trafficking ring. The Tweet went viral among Trump supporters, which led to many websites posing as news publications to produce content about the conspiracy theory. At the time of this writing, there have been 1,744,557 Twitter posts using the hashtag #pizzagate.

Referring back to Gunning's structure of three different receptions, practices and understandings, we can analyse the Pizzagate phantasmagoria in this way:

1. *The pedagogical and enlightened*: this group is aware of the mechanisms of the illusion, thus the illusion dissolves while the participants are able to use it as a philosophical toy in order to contemplate 'the nature of light.' The Buzzfeed article I referenced to develop my synopsis of Pizzagate is an example of this category.[7] Those that are practising the illusion pedagogically are explaining the mechanisms of the illusion to others, as

they are performing it. The audience believes they are privy to knowledge and more profound wisdom than those in the other categories. Being in the enlightened category does not release one from phantasmagoria – fantasies still rise in the space between the optic impressions of the fake journalism and the material essence of specific journalistic pieces. In the Pizzagate scenario, pedagogical practitioners have not yet been able to fully dispel the illusions, because digital traces that would led back to the original propagator of the rumour have been effaced. FBI digital forensic experts are supposedly investigating illusions like Pizzagate; meanwhile the authoritarian populists march forward. If the pedagogical wish is to remain 'enlightened,' those in this group must subject themselves to the constant bombardment of the senses by the phantasmagoria, while any contribution they make to online discussions further fuels the collective psychosis of those that truly believe that Pizzagate is real.

2. *The faithful and authoritarian*: the morality of phantasmagoria is untethered to its significant objects will attach itself, almost at random, to new objects that come floating through the mist. Displaced phantasmagoric morality carries over not only the emotional inertia enjoyed in its prior moral object, but also various cathected signifiers loosened from their prior context of cathexis. The speed at which image projection apparatuses have developed has caused major disruptions in the symbolic register, as unique inner experience that was previously obscure is now easily projected outward by nearly any individual, creating a schizoid moral environment. The Pizzagate mass hysteria began due to the illusion of a moral crisis. In the frantic response of the faithful, the formation of a new metaphysics began in language detached from objective reality by the internet. In such conditions, faith is lost in traditional understandings of a shared reality. And if the illusion is revealed to the faithful by way of proving the conspiracy theory false, the untethered and free floating phantasmagoric morality will be displaced into another area, such as the fervour surrounding the authoritarian populist. For the faithful, much like with early magic lantern shows, fake news has led to distrust in the human senses, and proof that consciousness needs transcendent faith to make sense of the world. It is easy to see how the authoritarian populist Trump has used this moral untethering to his advantage by posing as an authority on fake news.

3. *The magician-illusionist* of Pizzagate is anyone willing to knowingly propagate the false Pizzagate rumour with the intent of deception. Bloggers posing as journalists benefit from this deception through a range of ways – advertising revenue, political agenda, career advancement, narcissistic desire, and so on. Many of us are guilty of holding Pizzagate in suspension as we consume it for the sake of comedy and horror. Politicians may use deception for their campaigns. Individuals benefit from trickery in many solipsistic and perverse ways. The trickster remains an archetype and requires no other reason to exist aside from fulfilling his role.

The three categories thrive in symbiosis: the authoritarian is strengthened by imposing her moral code on the enlightened. The enlightened gains power by exposing the magician's tricks. And the magician is energized by entertaining the faithful with his magic show. All are being fed by the automatic machines of the digital communications environment, working ceaselessly, powered by capitalistic poaching of our biological energy through activities often perceived as benign, such as clicking on news articles. Despite moral outrage about illusions disrupting consensus concerning objective reality, the social media companies will not, in earnest, hinder the ecosystem, due to viral traffic increasing market-value.[8]

Indeed, the psychosexual drama of Pizzagate is similar to the central phantasmagoria in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. The two plots share an element of radical transgression that suspends all socio-symbolic links in favour of a transcendent pleasure surplus beyond what can be represented – in *Tristan* an illicit love affair that arose out of mix-up between suicide elixir and a love potion, and in Pizzagate, a gesturing towards an international pedophiliac sex orgy where the occulted pleasures of villains are indulged. Both plots can end in only one satisfactory way: complete obliteration of primary characters from the symbolic order. In *Tristan* this is represented by a song known as the *Liebestod* (love-death) sung with Isolde's last breath. In Pizzagate, for those who continue to indulge in the illusion, the suspension of disbelief is maintained by the impossible resolution of the villains' imprisonment and forever banished from political life once and for all. This tendency towards destruction in nineteenth-century opera has already been psychoanalyzed to death by critics with a Freudian bent (see Žižek and Dolar 2002, Tambling 2010, or Blanchot 2013). Just because the drama is occurring in new media, rather than with the theatrical illusions of the nineteenth century opera house, the effect should not be expected to diminish. Rather, we should be more concerned about potential effect, as the lines between reality and fiction are less clear when the illusionists are working on personal computers, rather than a stage, and the participants are walking into pizza parlours with loaded weapons in search of the villain in the fictitious story.

Tristan und Isolde is well known for its harmonic intensity. The production opens with an uneasy chord that begs for resolution – a chord that represents such emotional heat in this particular piece of music that it has become known as the 'Tristan chord.' Wagner employs the Tristan chord in a leitmotiv that signifies the character, Tristan's entrance into a scene, each time tugging the ear towards a much-needed harmonic resolution. That resolution does not come until the *Liebestod* – for the entire three acts of Wagner's music drama, the audience suffers through an impossible love whose only logical conclusion is elimination from the symbolic order with discordant harmony wreaking havoc on the nerves, increasing the intensity and suspense of a looming erotic death.

With *Tristan*, the phantasmagoric spell is broken and the audience is released from the erotic horror when Isolde dies and the harmony finally resolves. With Pizzagate, the signifiers loosened from their context remain orbiting in the

phantasmagoric mist without resolution. Even if the subject is resolved in their belief that Pizzagate was in fact just an illusion, there remain traces of the phantasmagoria in the signifiers now displaced into other moral objects. There is an analogy to be drawn between this sort of phantasmagoria that exists on the internet and psychosis.

10.6. Writing-Down-System

The concern for the spread of conspiracy theories online has begun to gain the attention of psychologists in recent years, as the effects move beyond isolated instances of paranoia, and into our social and civic lives via electoral politics. However, the attempt of psychologists to identify a psychotic mechanism set in motion by a conspiracy theory that triggers a collective of online users millions strong, has thus far failed.[9] This attempt to isolate a singular mechanism, such as illusory pattern perception – which could be subject to psychiatric treatment, or perhaps precipitate the creation of regulations that would prevent falsehoods from spreading through social media platforms – may at some point catch up to the technological development of image-making apparatuses at their current stage. But the technology will continue to develop at increasing rates, and it is doubtful that laws nor psychiatric treatment will be able to keep pace on the open market.

Rather than attempting to analyse and treat a collective of individual instances of paranoia by identifying the problem through controlled experiments, a structure for analysing online conspiracy theory content as if it is a singular psychotic subject, may provide valuable understanding at a pace that keeps up with technological developments. Lacan's elucidations on the psychotic structure – 'the strange juggler's game between the symbolic, the imaginary and the real' – in particular, provides some basis for understanding the *délire à deux* (delusions shared by two or more people) found on internet messaging boards (Lacan 1997, 47).

Within the language of the nearly two million Twitter posts using the hashtag #pizzagate, we can read a unified subject of the shared psychosis who has encountered a hole in the symbolic at a pivotal juncture. The signifying chain is interrupted when the subject is unable to signify aspects of their existence along the axes of metonymy and metaphor – loose associations are put in place of the absence. New Age murals of dragons and witches enacting pagan rituals on the walls of the Comet Ping Pong pizzeria are evidence of 'sinister individuals who don't mind flaunting their beliefs and (pedophiliac) practices.'[10] 'Cheese pizza' (CP) comes to stand for 'child pornography.' The shooting that occurred at the pizzeria is dismissed as a PsyOp campaign when it is discovered that the shooter has acting credits listed on IMDB. The signifiers coming to stand-in for meaning that is not otherwise attributed in the real, signals an absence of an anchoring signifier (the Lacanian Name-of-the-Father) and foreclosure. It will

be of no surprise that many believers in Pizzagate and other conspiracy theories that spread online have been diagnosed as schizophrenic.[11]

Analysing the millions of subjects posting on the internet collectively, the Pizzagate phantasmagoria can be analysed as a single psychosis in three distinct stages that resemble Tom Gunning's three categories of reception, practice and understanding, taking into consideration that a psychotic subject is not often fully delusional until triggered. If we imagine all of the online Pizzagate content as a singular psychotic subject, those *pedagogical and enlightened* perspectives pointing out falsehood and defending truth, such as the Buzzfeed exposé mentioned above, resemble latent psychosis – these perspectives contribute to delusion by offering a supposed super-egoistic reasoning, while simultaneously willing to utter unanchored signifiers for the sake of relating to hallucinatory murmuring from a less visible part of the psyche – an hallucinatory murmuring that grows louder each time it is referred to by someone in a position of questioned authority such as the 'fake news media' (Trump's term for 'enlightened' perspectives in the media). *The magician-illusionists* are amoral producers of online content that is known to be false for the sake of collecting admissions fees to a cheap theatrical production.[12] Trump himself also frequently fills this role, profiting in political capital with his base. In producing illusions, these content producers don't project the psychotic delusions fully to the outside world themselves, but open the door for the subject to become a martyr of the unconscious and susceptible to full-on delusion. Lastly, those faithful authoritarians – the true believers of the conspiracy theory, and also those truly most likely to be in the throes of a schizophrenic psychotic break or a similar diagnosis recognized by American mental health professionals – irrepressibly babble signifiers detached from the Lacanian real and can be found in hoards on social media, following online illusionists such as Brietbart, InfoWars or Trump. This collective of individuals resemble a group in the throes of an episode of shared psychosis, with those former two categories of magician and pedagogue made up of typical neurotics experiencing delusions under the influence of a 'primary' psychotic, one who believes with certainty that something hallucinatory or otherwise delusory is truly happening.

Hence, the psychotic hive-mind's neural pathways are the image projection apparatus, and the phantasmagoric opera is fully automated and performing at all times inside of our pockets. We do not enter into a space to be entertained like nineteenth century consumers of phantasmagoria – we have a dependency developed over several years of ceaseless access to horror, comedy, and drama provoking *jouissance*, all of which, for the psychotic – who tend to eroticize everything while experiencing an episode – is irresistible.

The image projection apparatus now also includes most of writing – the 140 characters or less bursts of language, consumable with a glance, its parsing more like looking at photograph than reading a text. All of the authority that just twenty years ago was given to published text is – thanks to automatic

writing machines and occluded labour – just as accessible to one that wishes to contribute to a phantasmagoric shared psychosis, as it is to anyone else.

And the psychotics will write. For example we can look at a case well-known to psychoanalysts – that of Judge Daniel Paul Schreber. The late nineteenth century judge was forced to leave the bench after experiencing delusions in which he was the lover of God. Schreber developed his own language in order to talk to his sweetheart, which was partially communicated through the tweeting of birds and auditory hallucinations, as well as through writing. Schreber also wrote obsessively in notebooks during his delusional state, attempting to restructure the world according to his delusions in largely illegible or nonsensical scribblings, which he referred to as the 'writing-down-system.' After recovering from his illness, Schreber wrote in his memoirs about the experience: 'I can only give the assurance that the writing-down-system became a mental torture, from which I suffered severely for years and to which I am only slowly getting a little accustomed; because of it, I had to endure trials of patience as they have probably never before had to be borne by a human being…' (Schreber 2001, 128)

We must imagine the image projection apparatus as not any particular device, but as an object massively distributed in time and space relative to humans. To develop a methodology for dispelling phantasmagoric psychosis, psychoanalysis can be employed for understanding, and perhaps preventing further episodes – even if it is of little use in treating the current episode. If a methodology for understanding the phantasmagoric potentials of social media technology is not developed further, the threat that an authoritarian could capitalize on shared psychosis triggered by communications environments such as the present one and severely alter perceptions of reality en masse is all too apparent.

Notes

1. The points key to this essay where Benjamin and Adorno use the phantasmagoria metaphor, are to be found in *The Arcades Project* (Benjamin), and *In Search of Wagner,* Chapter 6 (Adorno). Adorno's translator, Rodney Livingston, refers to a work by Gillian Rose for a full discussion on the concept as used by the two theorists: *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno*, 30–31, 40–42, 47.
2. My translation from *Capital Volume 1*, which in the original reads '*welches hier für sie die phantasmagorische Form eines Verhältnisses von Dingen annimm.*' Tom Gunning points out that the phantasmagoria metaphor is likely lost on English speaking readers due to '*phantasmagorische*' being translated as 'fantasy.'
3. Originally referenced by Tom Gunning in *Illusions Past and Future: The Phantasmagoria and its Specters.*
4. Libretto quote is from *Tannhausser Act 1. Sc. 2.*
5. From an advert for Phantasmagoria in a British newspaper, *The Hull Advertiser and Exchange Gazette* – 5/8/1802.

6 Referring to *Capital Volume 1*: 'In the same way the light from an object is perceived by us not as the subjective excitation of our optic nerve, but as the objective form of something outside the eye itself. But, in the act of seeing, there is at all events, an actual passage of light from one thing to another, from the external object to the eye. There is a physical relation between physical things. But it is different with commodities. There, the existence of the things quâ commodities, and the value relation between the products of labour which stamps them as commodities, have absolutely no connection with their physical properties and with the material relations arising therefrom.'

7 Silverman, Craig. 'How The Bizarre Conspiracy Theory Behind 'Pizzagate' Was Spread.' BuzzFeed. December 5, 2016. Accessed 14 October 2017. https://www.buzzfeed.com/craigsilverman/fever-swamp-election?utm_term=.srg4dp7RW#.bknPvgZOo.

8 See this *NYT* Op-ed by a former Facebook employee to further understand why we can't trust Facebook to prevent the spread of fake news: Parakilas, Sandy. 'We Can't Trust Facebook to Regulate Itself.' *The New York Times*, 19 November 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/11/19/opinion/facebook-regulation-incentive.html.

9 For a recent example of this type of psychological research, see van Prooijen J.-W., De Inocencio C., van Prooijen J.-W., Douglas K.M., and De Inocencio C. 2017. 'Connecting the dots: Illusory Pattern Perception Predicts Belief in Conspiracies and the Supernatural.' *European Journal of Social Psychology*.

10 More, Kristine, 'PIZZAGATE PAINTINGS: MODERN ART OR DISTURBING CLUES.' Inquisitr, 7 December 2016. Accessed 17 November 2017. https://www.inquisitr.com/3773311/pizzagate-paintings-modern-art-or-disturbing-clues/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+google%2FyDYq+%28The+Inquisitr+-+News%29

11 For further explanations of current psychoanalytic theories of psychosis, see Redmond, Jonathan D. 'Contemporary Perspectives on Lacanian Theories of Psychosis.' *Frontiers in Psychology* 4 (2013): 350. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00350. 18 November 2017.

12 For an example of how a 'magician-illusionist' profits off fake news, see the NPR story: Sydell, Laura. 'We Tracked Down A Fake-News Creator In The Suburbs. Here's What We Learned.' NPR. 23 November 2016. Accessed 18 November 2017. https://www.npr.org/sections/alltechconsidered/2016/11/23/503146770/npr-finds-the-head-of-a-covert-fake-news-operation-in-the-suburbs.

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