

From “Feminist Lies” to “White Replacement”: Digital Anti-Feminist Forums as Spaces of Collective Radicalization

Katharina Motyl¹

Introduction

Most readers will associate the group Proud Boys with white nationalism: The “far-right extremist organization” (Mapping Militants Project) gained notoriety due to its participation in the storming of the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021.² The group first received mainstream attention in one of the presidential TV debates in 2020; when then-President Trump was asked whether he wanted to distance himself from white supremacist groups such as the Proud Boys, Trump answered by telling the group to “stand back and stand by” (Collins and Zadrozny). It is less well-known that the exclusively male group and their Canadian founder Gavin McInnes actually have their roots in anti-feminism. McInnes has stated that he founded the Proud Boys in response to the (alleged) feminist “war on masculinity” (Hall). In his online videocast *The Gavin McInnes Show* (2015–2017), the pundit regularly disparaged feminism while venerating heterosexual marriage and traditional gender roles (Nagle 95–96).³

In their ideological trajectory from anti-feminism to white nationalism, the Proud Boys are far from unique. In fact, as I argue in this paper, digital anti-fem-

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- 1 I wish to acknowledge the crucial role Simon Strick’s insights have played in my research on anti-feminism, which he published in his groundbreaking study *Rechte Gefühle* and continuously shared with me in conversations.
 - 2 Of the 1,265 individuals who have, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, been charged or already sentenced due to their involvement in the attack on the U.S. Capitol as of January 2024 (Department of Justice), several are affiliated with the Proud Boys. Most prominently, Enrique Tarrio, former Chairman of the Proud Boys, was tried in court for his involvement in orchestrating this far-right attack on the epicenter of U.S. democracy and sentenced to 22 years in prison for seditious conspiracy in September 2023 (Wendling).
 - 3 Angela Nagle’s *Kill All Normies* has been critiqued for containing passages that were not fact-checked sufficiently (Libcom). The parts of the book I reference (that is, Nagle’s taxonomy of the manosphere and her discussion of the red-pill metaphor in alt-right circles) have not been subjected to criticism.

inism functions as a gateway to alt-right ideologies at large: Anti-feminist forums on social media constitute a space in which users collectively radicalize—or are purposefully enticed to radicalize by alt-right activists—to embrace alt-right ideologies more broadly, notably white nationalism. I base this argument on the analysis of select written posts, memes and videos posted in anti-feminist/white nationalist online environments, particularly on Reddit, which stylizes itself as dedicated to free speech and introduced bans of hateful content much later than other social-media platforms.

I begin by briefly characterizing the four major groups constituting the manosphere: “The manosphere is an aggregate of diverse communities brought together by a common language that orients them in opposition to the discourse and rhetoric of feminism” (Marwick and Caplan 553). These communities include men’s rights/fathers’ rights activists, pick-up artists, incels (involuntary celibates), and MGTOW (Men Going Their Own Way). In the article’s second part, I share three theses regarding the interconnections between digital media ecologies, anti-feminism, and the alt-right: First, the advent of the Internet, particularly of web 2.0 in the late aughts, has greatly radicalized anti-feminism and anti-genderism due to such technical affordances as anonymity and networked harassment. Second, anti-feminism and anti-genderism function as the ideological glue that binds together the various groups constituting the alt-right. Third, since the late 2000s, anti-feminism and anti-gender politics have moved from the margins of the Internet to the center of Western societies and politics—this migration has moved the boundaries of what is sayable in “offline” spaces of political discourse. These observations set the scene for my analysis of digital anti-feminism’s mediated tactics, arguments and aesthetic as well as affective strategies. In the article’s third part, I identify social-media affordances the alt-right exploits and media strategies it deploys to drive forth collective radicalization: While the circulation of humorous and irreverent memes with “more palatable” (Woods and Hahner 13) messages has emerged as a key alt-right strategy to attract users, once these users immerse themselves in “specialized” anti-feminist online environments, they are led to embrace more extreme views via so-called *redpilling*, that is, activists’ concerted and media-savvy distribution of disinformation online with the aim of gradually habituating users to far-right ideologies. Next, I distill three key arguments alt-right activists make to wed anti-feminism to white nationalism. In addition to calling for immigration restriction, these arguments aim at containing white replacement by policing white women’s sexuality and discouraging non-reproductive sexual activity in white men. In the fifth part, I analyze the aesthetic and affective strategies select anti-feminist and white nationalist social-media posts mobilize to conjure a sense of male domination and white hegemony, and to present anti-feminism and white nationalism as ideologically congruent. I conclude by suggesting that the alt-right succeeds in convincing users that their feelings of marginalization constitute “subversive

knowledge" (Bonefeld 8) regarding the true power dynamics in Western societies, which not only oppress men, but which also privilege racial minorities over white people, who will soon be replaced unless they start resisting.

The Manosphere

The manosphere denotes an assemblage of online groups united in their anti-feminist outlook; the term originated as a self-description, as it first surfaced in a 2009 Blogspot blog to describe a digital network of men's interest groups, and subsequently gained popularity via Ian Ironwood's 2013 publication *The Manosphere: A New Hope for Masculinity* (Ging 639–640). The manosphere is comprised of four major groups:

The first group, men's rights/fathers' rights activists,⁴ alleges that men's interests are systematically neglected in contemporary Western societies due to feminism's dominance in the political and cultural realms. Common grievances voiced, for instance, on the subreddit r/MensRights include discrimination against men by the legal system in custody and alimony cases, anti-male bias in the job market, compulsory military service for men in several countries, the presumption of male guilt when allegations of sexual assault are made, domestic violence experienced by men, and the practice of male circumcision (Rafail and Freitas). The Proud Boys' founder McInnes has stated: "I would say that feminism was done in maybe 1979. [...] And since then, it's just been women inventing problems and lying to create a world where feminists are needed. Like saying one in four women will be sexually assaulted or raped in college—or saying that women earn less than men and there's a wage gap. Like just blatant lies to justify their existence" (qtd. in Hall). Moreover, McInnes has frequently proclaimed that working women "would be much happier at home with a husband and children" (qtd. in Mazza), thereby negating the key principle of second-wave feminism that women should be able to choose their lifestyles.

The second group, pick-up artists (PUA), was founded by Roosh V (civil name: Daryush Valizadeh) and exchanges advice on how to coax women into sexual intercourse. Roosh V started out sharing advice on how to achieve sexual success with women on message boards in the aughts, then went on to publish several manuals with such telling names as *GAME* or *BANG* on how men can transform themselves

4 Let me clarify that I recognize that men and fathers are entitled to civil rights—in April 2024, for instance, Germany's Federal Constitutional Court (*Bundesverfassungsgericht*) strengthened a biological father's right to be a parent to his child in important ways (Suliak). Unfortunately, anti-feminists frequently co-opt men's and fathers' legitimate concerns; the subreddit r/Men's Rights on Reddit, for example, is filled with anti-feminist and misogynist vitriol.

into “alpha males” and “score” with women in various countries. PUAs systematically treat women as sex objects. Roosh V eventually went on to fuse his anti-feminist agenda with advocacy for white nationalism (Strick, “*The Alternative Right*” 244–250).

The third group, incels (involuntary celibates), is comprised of straight men who vent online about women’s refusal to have sexual relations with them, implying that women are obliged to fulfill men’s sexual desires. Several recent massacres in the U.S. were carried out by men who were members of the online incel community. For instance, Elliot Roger killed six people and injured fourteen near the UC Santa Barbara campus in May 2014 after uploading a “manifesto” in which he expressed hateful views of women, ranted about interracial couples, and lamented his inability to find a girlfriend. Due to such massacres committed by incels, political debates are currently (spring 2024) underway in the U.S. as to whether incels should be labeled a terrorist group. For instance, Bruce Hoffman and Jacob Ware, both counterterrorism experts on the Council on Foreign Relations, have argued that “[l]aw-enforcement and counterterrorism agencies need to recognize” incels as “a real and growing threat.” Several social-media platforms have banned incel groups; for instance, Reddit banned the subreddit r/incels in November 2017 because it was deemed to incite violence.

The fourth group, MGTOW, is made up of straight male separatists who avoid romantic relationships with women in protest against a culture allegedly poisoned by feminism; the group’s self-described goal is to focus on individual achievement and independence from women, who are spoken of in misogynist terms. There are four levels of “going their own way” that members can achieve, ranging from level 1, which requires a member’s vow to abstain from long-term relationships, to level 4, the highest level, where a man completely refuses to engage with a society poisoned by feminism (Nagle 94). In August 2021, Reddit banned the subreddit r/mgtow for inciting violence or promoting hate.

While all four groups are anti-feminist, they display misogyny to varying degrees. As the discussion above makes clear, incels and MGTOW overtly express hatred of women, while PUAs are misogynist in that they treat women as sex objects. On men’s rights forums, some users articulate misogynist views, whereas others claim that their opposition is directed at feminism, not women. For instance, anti-feminist and white nationalist YouTuber The Golden One states: “I’m against feminism, because I love women” (“Manliness”). I should point out that there is no perfect overlap between the ideologies of the various groups that I just enumerated. There is, in fact, enmity between some of them: Roosh V., the founder of the PUA movement, has called MGTOWs “sexual losers” (qtd. in Nagle 89); in 2015, incel users created the website PUAHate.com to disparage (hetero-)sexually successful men (Hoffman and Ware). These groups’ common ideological denominator is the belief that feminism is nefarious. While some men’s rights activists profess that they are interested in true equality between the genders, arguing that feminism has taken things too far,

the overwhelming majority of anti-feminists active online today believe that feminism is an ideology that structures Western societies, as a result of which a) men are systematically oppressed, b) women are making false accusations of sexual assault against men to ruin their lives, c) women have been led astray from the role "nature" intended them to have, and d) the "natural hierarchy" between the genders has been inverted.

What is more, these groups "congeal[] and convert[] through [their] mediated tactics" (Woods and Hahner 4). Many user communities who celebrated themselves for creating "meme magic" and engaged in shitposting and trolling "for the lulz" on 4chan habitually targeted not only political correctness, but also feminism. Then the Gamergate controversy occurred, a 2014/2015 campaign in which male video gamers who thought that the gaming community had become too politically correct subjected female gamers to harassment and ridicule in organized fashion. Gamergate is widely identified as a watershed moment in the rise of the alt-right (Nagle 24); it marked the moment when part of a multitude of users who were shitposting crystallized into a collective which used specific digital tactics, notably creating and spreading memes, to recruit individuals and direct public discussion at large (Woods and Hahner 3–5). Before analyzing digital anti-feminism's medial, affective, and aesthetic strategies as well as the arguments that present anti-feminism and white nationalism as ideologically congruent, I would like to map this complex territory by sharing three theses on the interconnections between digital media ecologies, anti-feminism, and the alt-right.

Digital Media Ecologies, Anti-Feminism, and the Alt-Right: Three Observations

First, the Internet, particularly the advent of web 2.0 in the late 2000s, has tremendously impacted anti-feminism and the anti-gender movement. Angela Nagle observes: "[E]ven the most militantly anti-feminist forms of pre-Internet men's rights activism now seem supremely reasonable and mild compared with the anti-feminism that emerged online in the 2010s" (88). Two affordances of digital media ecologies have contributed to the radicalization of anti-feminist discourse, in particular: To begin with, social media allow users to remain anonymous. As Dignam and Rohlinger write, "[o]nline anonymous spaces such as Stormfront, Reddit, and 4chan are appealing because individuals can mask their identities and express agreement with extreme views without their friends and neighbors finding out" (592). Moreover, hurling epithets at other users anonymously is quite another thing than disparaging another individual face to face. The encounter with the other's face, as Emmanuel Levinas has argued, makes one aware of the other's vulnerability, inviting reflection on how one's words and actions will affect the other (Burggraeve 30). This

becoming aware of the other's vulnerability is absent in users' virtual engagement with one another. In addition, digital infrastructures have facilitated the networked harassment of targets of anti-feminist and anti-gender agitation. According to Alice E. Marwick and Robyn Caplan,

groups like the ASJW⁵ [anti-social justice warrior] YouTubers—and many others—regularly encourage, promote, or instigate systemic networked harassment against their targets [...]. While harassing behavior is certainly not confined to anti-feminists, many of the techniques used in networked harassment, such as doxing (publishing personal information online), revenge porn (spreading intimate photos beyond their origins), social shaming, and intimidation were refined by men's rights activists and anti-feminist gamers during [...] Gamergate. (544)

Second, anti-feminism and anti-gender politics are the ideological glue that binds together the various groups constituting the alt-right—in fact, right-wing populist movements across the globe are connected by it. According to Gabriele Dietze and Julia Roth, “a common feature can be observed in all current [2020] versions of right-wing populism: an ‘obsession with gender’ and sexuality in different arenas. Populist actors conjure up the heteronormative nuclear family as the model of social organization, attack reproductive rights, question sex education, criticize [...] so-called ‘gender ideology,’ reject equal marriage and seek to re-install biologically understood binary gender differences” (7). I would add that right-wing populists also disparage Gender Studies as pseudo-scholarship. Alt-righters also crusade against pornography, maintaining that it distracts men from finding a woman with whom to procreate and thus secure the survival of the “white race.” An anti-pornography and anti-masturbation current runs quite prominently through anti-feminist and white nationalist circles. For instance, in his videocast *The Gavin McInnes Show* (2015–2017), the Proud Boys' founder encouraged his followers to pursue a “no wanks” agenda, meaning to abstain from watching porn and masturbation, and to “throw down bricks” instead, that is, to seek out relationships with women in real life (qtd. in Nagle 95–96). I will discuss this ideological position in more detail later; suffice it to say at this point that the embrace of an anti-pornography and anti-masturbation agenda functions as one of the key argumentative links between anti-feminism and white nationalism.

Third, since the late 2000s, anti-feminism and anti-gender politics have moved from the margins of the Internet to the center of Western societies and politics. To name but a few examples, not only did an endorser of alt-right ideological positions serve as U.S. president between 2017 and 2021, who among other things thought it

5 “Social justice warrior” is a disparaging term the alt-right uses to refer to individuals who lobby for causes such as equal rights for racial minorities, women, or the LGBTQ+ community.

was acceptable to grab women by their genitalia and who would appoint to the U.S. Supreme Court justices inimical to a woman's right to choose, with *Roe v. Wade* finally being overturned on June 24, 2022. Poland, an EU member, in January 2021 illegalized abortion except in cases when the pregnancy is a result of rape and/or incest or threatens the woman's life. The parliament of Hungary, another EU member state, passed legislation in June 2021 that discriminates against LGBTQ+ individuals.⁶ According to Marwick and Caplan, "[i]n many ways, members of the so-called 'manosphere' pioneered harassment techniques that are now leveraged not only by individuals and online communities, but by governments and other state actors" (544).

To conclude these observations regarding the relationship of digital media ecologies, anti-feminism, and the alt-right: As anti-feminism has migrated from the fringes of the Internet to the core of Western societies and politics, so have digital anti-feminism's language and its harassment tactics. While there would probably still be outrage if a GOP Representative used an obscene expletive to refer to feminists while speaking on the House floor, digital anti-feminist and other alt-right discourses have moved the boundaries of what is articulable in political debate in "offline" spaces such as parliaments or political talk shows on TV. In short, the Overton window has shifted to the right on the political spectrum (Palberg). And while Trump did not state in the Oval Office that it was acceptable to "grab women by their p—," the documented fact that he had made this statement did not render him morally unfit for the office of U.S. president in the eyes of the millions of Americans who cast their ballot for him. On the contrary, it appears as though some voters were drawn to Trump precisely because of his misogyny. In a 2016 post entitled "'Sexual Assault' Is Why I'm Endorsing Donald Trump for President of the United States," a moderator of the Reddit forum *redpillschool* stated: "When somebody accuses a powerful or famous figure like Trump of 'sexual assault,' I don't look the other way. I don't denounce them or their behavior. Instead I run towards them, because there is no truer signal which side somebody is on, than when they're given a *bogus accusation by the establishment*. This is our beacon to find allies in the war" (qtd. in Dignam and Rohlinger 589; my emphasis). This post not only communicates a key belief of contemporary anti-feminism in the United States—that women make false accusations of sexual assault to ruin men's lives—and is clearly identifiable as right-wing populist in its proposition that "the establishment" is pro-feminist; it also points to affordances of social-media infrastructures that alt-right activists could tap into and to media strategies such as *redpilling* they deployed to integrate disaffected individual users into the alt-right collective.

6 The law prohibits sharing information with minors that "promotes" homosexuality or gender reassignment; it also bans content depicting LGBTQ+ subject matter from daytime television (Amnesty International).

Integrating Individual Users into a Radical Collective: Anti-Feminist Media Strategies

Creating and spreading memes is a key strategy the alt-right uses in order to achieve “the radicalization of outsiders to far right advocacies” (Woods and Hahner 5). While “more palatable” (Woods and Hahner 13) memes that attract users due to their irony and irreverence will typically be spread on such platforms as Facebook and Twitter (now X), once users immerse themselves in more “specialized” social media environments such as Reddit forums or Telegram channels, they encounter more extreme views. Forums on Reddit, for instance, feature moderators, who wield considerable power in shaping forum discourse; moderators of anti-feminist subreddits are typically veterans of online anti-feminism, accordingly espouse particularly radical views, and are often politically organized (Dignam and Rohlinger 596; 607)—the aforementioned post by the *redpillschool* moderator who characterized allegations of sexual assault as evidence of political integrity is a case in point. In addition to moderators’ personal backgrounds, the infrastructure’s technical affordances come into play: For example, moderators can render a post with which they agree “sticky,” which makes the post constantly visible to users (Dignam and Rohlinger 595); they can also punish users with whom “they disagree by deleting their posts, publicly dismissing their points of view, or labeling them as trolls and banning them” (596) from the forum for violating its code of conduct. In addition, Reddit users can “upvote” or “downvote” a post, which increases or decreases its so-called “karma.” Content with positive karma becomes more visible to other users, while content with negative karma becomes less visible. The karma system “ultimately allows popular users [...] to dominate conversations, while obscuring posts that challenge popular views” (Dignam and Rohlinger 595). In sum, moderators’ significant power, the available tools, and available drive collective radicalization on anti-feminist Reddit forums, while veiling or even excluding more moderate voices.

Redpilling has emerged as a central method Reddit moderators and other agitators use to effect users’ radicalization—specifically, to tune disaffected male users, who may have turned to the manosphere due to a lack of dating success or a job setback, into white nationalist ideologies. The manosphere prominently deploys the metaphor of *the red pill* derived from the 1999 film *The Matrix*, in which protagonist Neo, portrayed by Keanu Reeves, is given the choice between taking the blue pill, and thus continuing to believe what he has been taught about the world, or the red pill, which will make him aware of the true character of the world, namely that it is a simulation called matrix created by intelligent machines. In digital anti-feminist circles, “taking the red pill” signifies coming to the realization that feminism is a lie around which Western societies are organized, and discovering “the truth,” namely that men occupy an oppressed position. The following post on the subred-

dit r/MensRights illustrates common views on feminism exchanged in digital anti-feminist forums:

Today, women are privileged over men. Women have more legal rights than men, they benefit from affirmative action, quotas, institutional discrimination and simple bias in their favor in things like hiring decisions, landlords renting properties, police deciding who to arrest & prosecute, etc.

Feminists know they are lying and that women are privileged. The entire purpose of feminism is to entrench and extend women's privileges, benefits and special treatment. So they react violently to anything that threatens that outcome. Such as people speaking the truth and citing facts. (u/EricAllonde)

The term "the manosphere" came up with to capture this alleged systematic discrimination of men is "misandry" (Marwick and Caplan 544); one also finds concepts such as "female privilege," as the post quoted above underscores. The red-pill cosmology conceives of men as belonging to one of two categories: They are either alpha males or beta males. This taxonomy is epitomized by the expression "alpha fucks, beta bucks" (u/Spiritual_Age_4992), meaning that women allegedly throw themselves at the feet of "alpha males"—physically attractive men with dominant personalities—for sexual intercourse without making any demands of them in exchange for sex, while they expect "beta males" to finance their lifestyle, seek to change the behavior of a "beta male," and use sex as a reward when the "beta male" meets these assorted expectations. Red-pill forums commonly promulgate that while women like to engage in sexual promiscuity with "alpha males" in their twenties, they want to settle down in their thirties with a reliable "beta male" who will take care of them financially—and their children fathered by the "alpha males."

That anti-feminist forums may function as a gateway to alt-right ideologies at large, not least because alt-right activists agitate in these forums to recruit users for their cause, is underscored by the following post on the subreddit r/MensRights. This post constitutes a metadiscourse on the subreddit r/TheRedPill, which had, when the user posted this, already been quarantined by Reddit for featuring "shocking or highly offensive content" (Reddit, "r/TheRedPill").

I think what theredpill did was more than giving dating advice. For many (like me) it served as the entry gate to discussion freed from political correctness.

"If all media tell me a wrong picture of dating and women, *what else are they lying about?*" Is the thought process many newcomers will follow there. After that they crave for alternative view points also regarding politics.

So to make my point short: To begin *redpill*ing *normies* you need to operate in the egalitarian framework at first and demonstrate its inconsistencies. After that they will be more open to alternative ways to look at the world. (Post depicted in Strick, *Rechte Gefühle*, 261; my emphasis)

Media critique takes center stage in this post—legacy media are characterized as being in cahoots with political elites, whose ideology (for instance, political correctness) they disseminate; while legacy media, according to the user, spread false knowledge (the example the user references is incorrect information regarding women and the world of dating), social media allow male users to become cognizant of “the truth” by validating their lived experience. Once social media have made male users aware that legacy media are lying about gender relations/dating, the post maintains in its most crucial passage, users will question “what else are they lying about?” This post thus discloses digital anti-feminism as a gateway space in which users are radicalized to embrace alt-right ideologies more broadly. I use the passive voice purposefully here, for the post unabashedly acknowledges that alt-right activists seek to foster users’ radicalization by “redpilling normies.” While online anti-feminist agitators first devised the metaphor of “taking the red pill” to signify coming to the realization that Western societies are poisoned by feminism and oppress men (Nagle 88), the metaphor was eventually also used for white-nationalist purposes: Nagle found that “[o]n AlternativeRight.com ‘the red pill’ and ‘being red pillled’ was one of the central metaphors and favorite expressions [...] to describe their [...] racial awakening” (88). The social-media strategy of *redpilling* thus involves arguing why the epiphany that feminism is nefarious and men are oppressed ought to be followed by the epiphany that white people are discriminated against. In the following, I will highlight three prominent narratives on social media that fuse an anti-feminist with a white nationalist agenda.

The Discursive Establishment of a Link between Anti-Feminism and White Nationalism

The first narrative maintains that there is a need to police white women’s sexuality so that they produce children in order to secure the survival of the “white race.” This narrative abrogates central tenets of second-wave feminism and the sexual revolution, since it denies women the freedom to choose their sexual partners and espouses natalism, that is, the idea that it is every (white) woman’s duty to have children. Consider the meme in image 1, found on ifunny, a website that allows users to create memes, which other users may then share: The image shows a woman holding a baby, both white and blonde, in a field of red poppies, the visual contrast highlighting the pair’s whiteness. It is captioned with “White women of childbearing age: TWO PERCENT of the World’s population. Gotta save the minorities ... right?” In a gesture of ironic appropriation regarding the left’s political goal of minority protection, the meme suggests that two specific minority populations need to be protected: white women of childbearing age and the “white race,” which cannot reproduce in sufficient numbers unless white women of childbearing age comply. In addition to

espousing the paternalistic view that (white) women need protection and the patriarchal politics that sexual choice ought to be abrogated from women, this meme allows viewers to associate its message with a broad range of right-wing political projects, ranging from criminalizing abortion to curbing immigration or even reversing the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Loving v. Virginia*, which endowed interracial marriage with constitutional protection.

Image 1



Source: <https://br.ifunny.co/picture/white-women-of-childbearing-age-two-percent-of-the-world-y8tmT6kn9>, accessed 4 January 2024.

The desire to police women's sexuality was manifested in law when the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in June 2022; the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* stripped women seeking an abortion of constitutional protection and has, as of November 2023, led to near-total or very

restrictive abortion bans in sixteen states (Sherman and Witherspoon). I am not suggesting that the desire to police women's sexuality indexed by *Dobbs* is only rooted in right-wing anxieties regarding white replacement.⁷ Forcing women to carry an unwanted pregnancy to term can certainly also be read as an expression of the lust to punish women by sexually frustrated incels or, as journalist Amanda Marcotte puts it, by men “who experienced nervous sweats during the #MeToo era.” Not least, policing women's sexuality aligns with the political aims of Christian fundamentalists.

The second narrative fusing anti-feminism and white nationalism suggests that male migrants/men of color steal white women, who rightfully belong to white men, and commit “miscegenation” with them. Content promoting this narrative not only aspires to abrogate the right to freely choose their sexual/romantic partners from women; it also alerts to the alleged dangers of “race mixing” and at least implicitly, but often overtly so, calls for the need to curb immigration. “The white race is overtaken through male feminization and interracial breeding,” stated the self-description of the subreddit *r/WhiteboyExtinction* (qtd. in Strick, *Rechte Gefühle* 258), which has meanwhile been banned for violating the website's “rule against promoting hate” (Reddit, “*r/WhiteboyExtinction*”). The alt-right has coined the terms *cuck/cuckoldry* to suggest an analogy between a cuckold, that is, a husband whose wife is unfaithful, and a male citizen of a Eurocentric nation who allows his country to be invaded by foreigners. According to the “profascist” website *rightrealist.com*, which was deactivated in the spring of 2020 (Strick, *Rechte Gefühle* 258),

[t]he term “cuck” from an alt-right perspective began as a very simple analogy: Allowing foreigners to invade, exploit, or attack your nation or people is compared with cuckoldry. In other words, a cuck is a man who allows his wife (nation) to sleep with another man (foreign people), and who invests time and resources into raising a child that is not his own. The term can be used more generally either as a noun to describe a man who has emasculated himself, or as a verb for weak and submissive behavior. (qtd. in Strick, *Rechte Gefühle* 258–259)

The third narrative connects anti-feminism to white nationalism via an opposition to pornography. Anti-feminists who oppose pornography argue that it distracts men from the vital duty of containing white replacement by seeking a female partner

7 This dovetailing of racist and patriarchal politics is not new to the Internet age, but is deeply rooted in U.S. history: In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, anti-miscegenation laws were rhetorically justified with the need to protect white women's sexual purity (Botham). Likewise, perpetrators and defenders of lynchings of African American men between the end of Reconstruction and the 1950s frequently accused the lynched party of having sexually assaulted, and thus besmirched the sexual and racial purity, of white women (Ore).

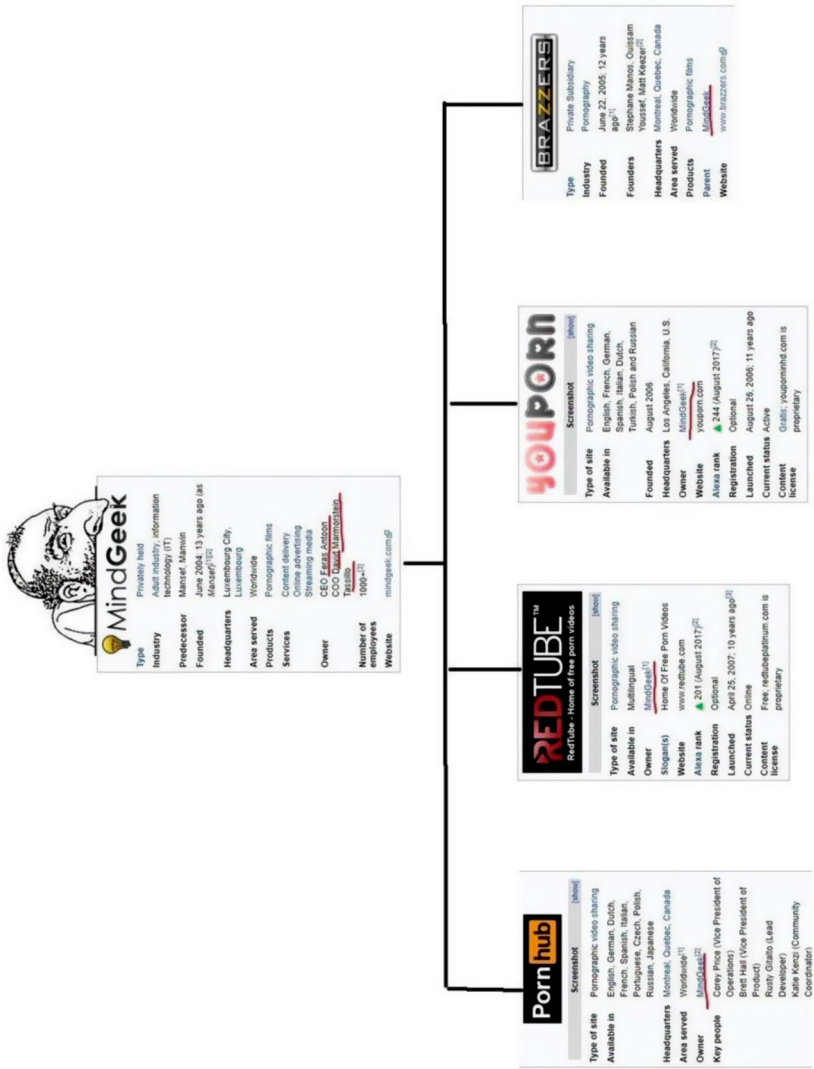
of European ancestry with whom to procreate. The YouTuber The Golden One (a Swedish bodybuilder and neo-fascist whose legal name is Marcus Follin) has 114,000 subscribers as of January 2024. He links a male fitness agenda and misogynist beliefs that women need to be dominated by men with a white nationalist agenda. Nordic history and mythology feature prominently in his content. For instance, he advises Western male followers to emulate Vikings. He is also an anti-porn activist: Porn and masturbation, in his logic, channel sexual energy that men had better invest in "productive endeavors," such as procreating with "fair maidens" to secure the survival of the "Nordic race." In his clip "Why I Hate Porn and Why You Should Stop Watching It," he in self-help fashion advises Western male followers to adopt the following mindset: "I'm going to get so confident, so physically dominant that I can attract [...] some sort of fair maiden instead of saying 'You know what, I give up and I'm just gonna watch porn.'"

In particularly extreme content pornography is linked to the narrative of a Jewish world conspiracy. Consider image 2, a meme posted on the subreddit *r/ForwardsFromKlandma*.⁸ This graphics links the dissemination of porn to the conspiracy narrative of Jewish usurpation by highlighting that the company MindGeek, which owns/is the parent company of four porn-streaming websites, among them the heavily trafficked site Pornhub,⁹ is steered by CEO Faras Antoon and COO David Marmorstein Tassilo. By underlining the names of Antoon and Tassilo, and by featuring the caricature of a Jewish man reminiscent of anti-Semitic propaganda in Nazi Germany, the graphics seeks to convey the message that Jewish individuals/individuals of Middle Eastern background foster degeneracy in Western societies and seek to get white men distracted from their responsibility of securing the survival of the "white race." Having introduced the major argumentative links alt-right content establishes between anti-feminism and white nationalism, I will now turn to select aesthetic and affective strategies alt-right posts deploy.

8 The ideological trajectory of the subreddit *r/forwardsfromklandma* is hard to determine; some posts feature headlines that seem to critique the far-right memes they share, while other posts affirm far-right content.

9 In October 2023, Pornhub was the 14th-most-trafficked website worldwide ("Top Websites Ranking").

Image 2



Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/ForwardsFromKlandma/comments/xsumk9/til_klandmas_antiporn_theories_are_rooted_in/ (accessed 4 January 2024).

The Aesthetic and Affective Strategies of Anti-Feminism and White Nationalism

Scholars often apply one of two frameworks to account for the rise of the alt-right since the late 2000s. The first framework explains the increasing pull that anti-feminism and white nationalism have exerted on white men by pointing to the latter's experience of economic and/or gendered *insecurity*, be this experience substantiated or unsubstantiated. One articulation of this framework maintains that white men who experience economic precarity due to neoliberalism, misidentify the source of their predicament and turn against women and/or ethnic minorities instead of blaming neoliberal capitalism (Hochschild). This argument does not explain, however, why college-educated men from the middle and upper classes are drawn to anti-feminism and white nationalism. The second framework maintains that anti-feminists and white nationalists are largely motivated by anger and hatred (Cole). Some scholars combine both frameworks, for instance, Michael S. Kimmel in his much-discussed study *Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era*. Kimmel proposes that white men have increasingly turned to alt-right ideologies due to "aggrieved entitlement" (x)—they feel that the rewards that were traditionally reaped by white men, such as economic prosperity and "calling the shots" in the social and political realms, are increasingly being kept from them although they have worked hard. According to Kimmel, alt-right spin doctors such as Rush Limbaugh are alarmingly successful at transforming this sense of insecurity into outrage (31–46); white men then turn to anti-feminism and white nationalism, which promise to return America to a society where white men will again experience what they think is rightfully theirs: the economic and social privileges that have traditionally come with whiteness and masculinity (xi–xiii). While I find Kimmel's notion of "aggrieved entitlement" productive—being a white man, regardless of which class, still tips the scales into one's favor, just not as much as it did 30 years ago—and while it is evident that much anti-feminist and white nationalist social-media content spews hatred (edged on by right-wing spin doctors and meme wizards), I would like to propose a multicausal framework that additionally takes into account the perspective offered by Simon Strick. In his seminal study *Rechte Gefühle*, Strick contends that part of what makes alt-right ideologies attractive is that they offer users and voters options for identification they experience as positive, and for expressing affirmative affects such as love:

Enmity towards foreigners and women is transformed into the perceived love of self, of the group and of the project of protecting and preserving "European peoples and cultures." White supremacy rearticulates itself as *empowerment* of white people; misogyny and defending male privilege are recoded as activism against discrimination. Such discursive recoding ultimately feels less like a totalitarian-

fascist version of politics and society, but more like a self-defense project for “white culture” and “real men.” (Strick, *Rechte Gefühle* 126; original emphasis; my translation).¹⁰

Building on Strick’s insight regarding the importance of alt-right agitators’ projection of a sense of male pride/white pride, the first affective strategy I would like to identify is digital anti-feminists’/white nationalists’ dissemination of an affirmative self-image. Aforementioned YouTuber The Golden One serves as a prime example of this strategy; to a large degree, his videos focus on “motivational and positive messaging” instead of “the tropes of right-wing paranoia” (Strick, “*The Alternative Right*” 251). For instance, in his video “White Man. Stop Letting Your Woman Trample You Down,” he admonishes that “white guys” ought to stop “treat[ing] ourselves like some subservient slaves,” encouraging his followers to adopt “self-respect” instead, and to demand “respect” from their female partners (The Golden One, “White Man”). Strick summarizes The Golden One’s approach of white masculine self-empowerment as follows: “He proposes workouts, physical culture, abstinence from pornography, and the rediscovery of ‘white’ heritage, honor, and confidence. Instead of hate speech [...], The Golden One remakes ‘white pride’ as motivational language: He asks his audience to overcome the negative thinking and depression induced by feminism and multiculturalism” (“*The Alternative Right*” 253). In his video “The Women Question,” The Golden One explains that nationalism is incompatible with misogyny (at least when it concerns white women): “If you are a nationalist, you cannot harbor anti-female sentiments. Nationalism means that you love your people, and if you hate half of your people, that’s [...] not congruent with each other.” While the Swedish influencer mobilizes the trope of migrant men as rapists and speaks of “multicultural hell” in this video, he also entices white male users to invest positive affect in their “people” and suggests that harboring hatred towards white women is inappropriate. (It bears mentioning that whereas the YouTuber considers white women as deserving of love, he casts them as undeserving of the vote in the same video.) More recently, select anti-feminists seem to have adopted the strategy of cathecting identities that the mainstream casts as problematic with positive affect. Social-media personality Andrew Tate, for instance, stylizes himself as the “king of toxic masculinity” (qtd. in Artsy), thus celebrating an iteration of masculinity that the leftist #MeToo movement identified as the root cause of systemic sexual assault of women by men. In his videos and posts, Tate has frequently glorified violence against women (Artsy). In December 2022, Tate was arrested in Romania on charges of rape and human trafficking. Many of his millions of followers—he has 8.6 million followers on X (formerly Twitter) as of January 2024—were “expressing support for

10 Strick builds on Sara Ahmed’s insights, who argues that “fascism as a politics of hate is written in the language of love” (Ahmed).

his plight, arguing that Tate is a positive force on men and that the Romanian government is trying to silence him for telling the truth" (Artsy).

Again, as the example of Tate underscores, plenty of alt-right content deploys the politics of hatred. As mentioned earlier, some anti-feminist users engage in extreme forms of harassment—death threats; rape threats; doxing; revenge porn—to intimidate feminists or individuals perceived as such; other strategies include disparaging feminist women or men interested in gender equality in their bodily materiality or their gender performance.

In a meme user jedimentat posted on imgflip, a site that allows users to generate memes that can subsequently be shared by other users, an image of a woman whose body size does not conform to the Western beauty norm of slimness is captioned with the text "How do we destroy the patriarchy? It's simple. We eat it" (jedimentat). Adrienne Massarani and Shira Chess have argued that anti-feminist memes portray female social justice warriors—to reiterate, this is a term the alt-right uses disparagingly for individuals dedicated to social-justice causes—as monstrously feminine, as having non-normative bodies. By insinuating that feminists are "fat," this post suggests that feminism is practiced by women who are not "hot enough" to find a male partner, thus turning to feminism out of sexual frustration. Additionally, this meme intimates that feminists are cannibals who devour men, which renders them dangerous.

At the same time, anti-feminist users disparage men interested in gender equality—or more generally, men they perceive as politically progressive—as effeminate. For instance, a post that was widely shared on Reddit, both affirmatively and in terms of critique, features two images of young white men covering the lower parts of their faces with their hands in shock or distress. The meme is captioned "Progressive males are not men; they move and gesticulate like women. The 'hand-over-mouth' gesture is one example. Physically repulsive" (u/sulkilystage). The post not only chastises the men depicted for failing to perform hegemonic masculinity, but also instructs "non-progressive" users that disgust is the appropriate affective response to beholding progressive masculinity. Notably, the post does not specify at which occasion the images were taken—whether the young men depicted identify as progressive is unclear. Thus, the post also disciplines male users who identify as conservative/alt-right, by drawing a clear boundary between acceptable versus non-acceptable displays of masculinity. Content such as this suggests that men advocating for feminism and other progressive causes need not be taken seriously, as they fail to perform hegemonic masculinity.

Image 3



Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/ForwardsFromKlandma/comments/14exror/is_that_eminem/ (accessed 4 January 2024).

Little surprisingly, the alt-right also pathologizes being queer and being trans; what is analytically more interesting are the ways in which the alt-right defines normative whiteness as entailing heteronormativity, cisnormativity, modest femininity, and alpha masculinity. Consider the post found on the subreddit r/ForwardsFromKlandma in image 3: The post maintains that “white pride” is incompatible, first, with articulations of femininity that insist on sexual liberation and a woman’s right to wear whatever she pleases, and, second, with trans-inclusivity. The post mobilizes the bikini-clad woman in the left-most picture as an index for “[s]luts,” who are characterized as “vile abominations, a disgrace to their race.” The center picture shows Caitlyn Jenner, a celebrity trans woman who identifies as a Republican; tellingly, the post does not use the term “trans,” but treats Jenner as an example of “crossdressers,” whom it calls “revolting surgically mutilated freaks

that need to change their mind instead of mutilating their genitals."¹¹ By calling the bikini-donning woman a "slut" and by calling trans people "freaks," the post invokes a natural order, according to which the gender binary is natural, heterosexuality is natural, identifying with the gender (the alt-right would probably use the term "sex") one is assigned at birth is natural, and biology predisposes women to be subservient and modest (while it predisposes men to be dominant)—individuals deviating from this natural order are cast as degenerate and thus, harmful to the health and reproduction of the "white race."

While particularly extreme content mobilizes age-old racist, sexist, etc. stereotypes and frequently practices what amounts to hate speech (the meme linking pornography to the narrative of a Jewish world conspiracy and the "white pride" post are cases in point), less radicalized users might post content that communicates "milder" messages explicitly, but conveys more extreme messages as subtext. A photo of up-and-coming Democratic Congresswomen, published in *Vanity Fair* in January 2019, was shared on the subreddit *r/ForwardsFromKlandma* with captions (see image 4): Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is described as "[living] with [a] 'partner,'" Ayanna Pressley as having "[m]arried a single father," Ilhan Omar as a "Muslim with hijab," Deb Haaland as a "[s]ingle mother of [a] lesbian daughter," Veronica Escobar as having "[o]fficiated a 'gay wedding,'" and, finally, Sharice Davids as a "LESBIAN." Except for one case, the assertions made with regard to these prominent Congresswomen all decry the deterioration of heteronormativity, traditional marriage, and the nuclear family; "only" the text pertaining to Ilhan Omar overtly taps into racism/Islamophobia by suggesting that Islam is un-American. Note that the post does not explicitly mention what the audience will certainly perceive: All depicted women are of color. This meme's visual subtext, I contend, carries a surplus meaning that exceeds the message conveyed by the captions; this subtext suggests that the depicted group, representing the vanguard of the Democratic Party, displays a microcosm of what the U.S. will look like if Democrats are allowed to run the country, thus instigating anxieties that "brown hoards" will take over the country, in addition to "sexual deviants" and women misled by feminism, whom the captions explicitly warn of. Most Americans right of center care about family values and believe in a heteronormative order; while some Republican voters may have scruples sharing content that unequivocally contains hate speech such as the meme linking porn to the narrative of Jewish usurpation, they might share this image, thus communicating anxieties about white replacement without having to articulate this explicitly. In addition to containing blatant misogyny and homophobia, this meme,

11 The third dimension of "flawed whiteness" the post references—via the rapper Eminem, shown in the right-most picture—concerns white people's cultural emulation of Black people, who are denigrated via vile slurs.

I submit, constitutes racist dog whistling in the age of web 2.0. Alt-right agitators deliberately use this strategy to radicalize users.

Image 4



Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/ForwardsFromKlandma/comments/11jt7qi/these_are_considered_insults/ (accessed 4 January, 2024).

Finally, while scholars generally argue that the alt-right is defined more by what it is against—for instance, feminism, multiculturalism, and political correctness—than by a coherent ideology (Woods and Hahner 4; Nagle 12), select anti-feminist/white nationalist groups use social media to police who is part of the collective. In response to the emergence of social-media groups entitled “Proud Girls”—made up of women who ideologically support the Proud Boys’ causes of white nationalism and male domination—the all-male group responded on its official Telegram channel with a post that read: “Proud Boy’s [sic] Girls or Proud Girls are both ridiculous ideas. Fuck that. Don’t ride our coattails. Want to support us? Get married, have babies, and take care of your family” (depicted in Proud Girls USA Official). Although the alt-right has a tendency to accept as spokespeo-

ple individuals such as Milo Yiannopoulos, who emerged as a crusader against political correctness in the 2010s, although he is gay, and as such, hardly meets the alt-right's norm of straight alpha masculinity, the Proud Boys' post serves as a reminder that a robust part of the alt-right will not march side by side with women in (violently) fighting white replacement due to its staunch anti-feminism—women may only further the cause by fulfilling the role the natural order assigns to them: reproducing and providing a home for their race-warrior husbands.

Last, I would like to point to the semiotic approaches the alt-right uses. First, the alt-right engages in appropriation and resignification vis-à-vis political discourse of the left. For instance, the post that I quoted to introduce anti-feminist views of feminism is actually a response to the anti-racist, feminist slogan "when you are privileged, equality feels like oppression." The user appropriates the slogan for his purposes, opens his post with the statement "Today, women are privileged over men," and proceeds to paint a picture of men as oppressed in contemporary society. The meme portraying "white women of childbearing age" as needing protection, is another case in point, as it appropriates the left's agenda of minority protection. This strategy of appropriation and resignification may have had its origins in alt-right shitposting and trolling "for the lulz," but, as Strick reminds us, the alt-right has in the meantime unironically adopted the rhetoric of white people and heterosexuals as minorities under threat. Second, the alt-right has mastered speaking in code. When platforms ban certain content because they deem it tantamount to hate speech and/or incitement to violence, anti-feminist and white nationalist users devise coded language to continue discussing their beliefs; to those who are not in the know, the new forum's name may seem innocuous, while the in-group has found a new online space for discussing its misogynist and/or racist beliefs. For instance, when Reddit banned the subreddit r/incels in November 2017, incel users created the subreddit r/braincels (which Reddit only banned in September 2019 for "content that harasses or bullies"). *Operation Google* represents a particularly stark effort to disguise hateful content: After Google introduced the tool Perspective, which allowed social-media platforms to identify and subsequently remove "insults and online toxicity" (Bhat and Klein 156), some 4chan users launched *Operation Google* to enable the expression of hateful content while circumventing such AI detection tools: "Googles" was used as a slur for Black people, "Skypes" as a slur for Jewish people, "butterflies" as a slur for LGBTQ+ individuals, among others (Bhat and Klein 156). In addition to disguising hate speech, this operation took "revenge on Google by [eventually] compelling it to censor itself," as the tech company's brand name had been turned into a racist slur (Bhat and Klein 156).

Conversely, the digital vanguard of the alt-right vigorously polices efforts to resignify the collective's memes. As Woods and Hahner state, "[n]early any attempt to resignify an Alt-right meme by outsiders is often minimized by the subsequent proliferation of extremist memes. In this sense, the Alt-right fights back against at-

tempts to redeploy its imagery by inundating social media with memes. While radical possibilities of rhetorical invention remain with more general memes, Alt-right memes often iterate the advocacy of extremists” (12).

Crucially, by deploying the affective and aesthetic strategies just outlined, alt-right agitators have succeeded in enticing individual users, many of them disaffected and socially isolated, to experience empowerment by joining a virtual collective, as well as to drive that virtual collective from their gaming chairs to the voting booths in droves, thus transforming the virtual collective into a constituency whose voting behavior affects the political process ‘offline.’ Dignam and Rohlinger have analyzed over 1,700 anti-feminist Reddit posts from 2016 and conclude that

leaders of the forum the “Red Pill” were able to move a community of adherents from understanding men’s rights as a personal philosophy to political action. This transition was no small endeavor. The Red Pill forum was explicitly apolitical until the summer before the 2016 election. During the election, forum leaders linked the forum’s neoliberal, misogynistic collective identity of alpha masculinity to Trump’s public persona and framed his political ascendance as an opportunity to effectively push back against feminism and get a “real” man into the White House. (591)

Subversive Knowledge

Although my previous discussion confirms that scholars have been right to stress the crucial role *affect* plays in alt-right online content and thus, in users’ collective radicalization, ironically, the alt-right stylizes itself as disseminating *knowledge* that is suppressed by both political elites and legacy media. To recall but three examples I discussed: The user arguing that women are privileged over men today on the subreddit r/MensRights stylizes the men’s rights community as “speaking the *truth* and citing *facts*” (my emphasis). The meme appropriating the leftist agenda of minority protection to argue pro policing white women’s sexuality emulates the scientific practice of citing empirical data by mentioning that white women of child-bearing age make up but “TWO PERCENT of the World’s population.” The Golden One refers to the self-help advice he shares on his YouTube channel as “teachings” and calls those “enlightened” who have realized that alpha masculinity is needed to contain the threat of white replacement.

The alt-right, I propose, conceives of itself as disseminating “subversive knowledge” (Bonefeld 8). This concept originated in the leftist critique of such structures as capitalism, racism and patriarchy. Werner Bonefeld, a Marxist political theorist, defines subversive knowledge as “what [...] we have to know to prevent misery” (8). In Bonefeld’s usage, the notion aims at empowering those oppressed by the afore-

mentioned structures: By making sense of minorities' experience and theorizing their situation, the minorities and their allies, he suggests, will produce knowledge that can in turn inform political reforms designed to alleviate the "misery" experienced by those disenfranchised by capitalism or structural racism. While a plethora of empirical data exists that gives evidence of the reality of structural discrimination against people of color, women, or the poor, white men's feelings of marginalization voiced on anti-feminist and white nationalist forums are by and large not validated by empirical data garnered in scholarly studies, but are just that: *feelings*. The alt-right consistently portrays universities and scholars as perpetuating leftist ideology and as being in cahoots with the establishment to conceal the fact that the notions of female privilege and white oppression are not backed up by scholarship. Yet, despite this, alt-right activists recognize that knowing something and/or having proof of something carries higher credibility and constitutes a stronger call to action than merely having an ominous feeling. In light of the alt-right's strategy of appropriating and resignifying the left's concepts, it is somewhat fitting that a concept originating in leftist critique would be most appropriate to characterize the alt-right's self-image as disseminator of subversive knowledge: The alt-right has succeeded in convincing users that their feelings of marginalization constitute subversive knowledge regarding the true power dynamics in Western societies, which not only oppress men, but which also privilege racial minorities over white people, who will soon be replaced unless they start resisting.

At first glance, alt-right "knowledge" occupies a structurally similar position to schools of theory dedicated to emancipation and social transformation since Marx. As Geoff Shullenberger writes, "[w]hat is striking about the redpilling experience is that it resembles some of the most influential currents of modern intellectual life. Since the late nineteenth century, a series of new variants of the Platonic and Cartesian model of knowledge have arisen, in which radical suspicion is the first step in grasping counterintuitive truths that overturn the conventional understanding of reality." Yet, while alt-right subversive "knowledge" may share the liberating telos, and thus, the energizing impetus, of such leftist epistemic projects as Marxism, Gender Studies or Critical Race Theory, unlike scholars in these fields, producers of alt-right "knowledge" believe that knowledge generated at universities categorically serves the interests of the establishment. Since they view traditional locales and channels of producing and disseminating knowledge (the university and the media) as corrupt, purveyors of alt-right subversive "knowledge" feel a particular need for proselytizing and have mastered spreading their 'knowledge' via alternative channels such as social media.

Frieder Vogelman proposes a framework that allows for distinguishing between mere truth claims (such as the alt-right's claims that men are oppressed in Western societies or that climate change does not exist) and such practices and statements that deserve the denomination *knowledge*. Whereas statements and

practices from which “truth emerges as a force and is thus irreducible” (Vogelmann 79; my translation) are aptly termed *knowledge* from an analytical perspective,¹² other truth claims merely simulate the emergence of truth (80), but can be shown to have cloaked another force (such as economic or political power) in the vocabulary of truth (83) or can be reduced to the individuals, objects or other forces involved in the promulgation of these truth claims (79). Alt-right truth claims belong to this latter category and, thus, do not qualify as knowledge from an analytical perspective.

What the alt-right disseminates, then, are *felt truths*, which confuse “affective force with truth” (Vogelmann 86; my translation), or *affective facts* (Massumi). The transformation of a feeling such as “[t]oday, women are privileged over men” into “knowledge” occurs in the manosphere, where this feeling is shared *collectively*. Whereas an individual man irritated by his dating experiences with women may have the feeling that “something is wrong with the system,” but may occasionally still ask himself whether his lack of dating success can be attributed to a lack of compatibility between himself and the women in question, once he immerses himself in the manosphere, he meets other men who feel that “the system is rigged.” Due to the belief that there is not only strength in numbers, but also truth, the crowd concludes that a feeling shared by so many must be indexical of a fact. As I have discussed above, this process is greatly abetted by alt-right agitators’ social-media strategies such as redpilling and their exploitation of the affordances of digital infrastructures. While alt-righters profess to proclaim knowledge, the digital alt-right mass is *de facto* largely governed by the unconscious and by the affective (Le Bon), radically furthering the interests of the subject position the alt-right collective casts as normative: white masculinity.

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12 Vogelmann’s approach holds great analytical benefit because it evaluates the actual statements and practices made in projects claiming to produce knowledge. This neither takes for granted that any scientific or scholarly project produces knowledge—although the great majority of scientific/scholarly statements and practices stand the test and qualify as knowledge—nor does it view science/scholarship as the only generator of knowledge: “Truth does not only emerge from scientific practices, and the latter had better acknowledge this” (Vogelmann 87; my translation). Vogelmann references patients’ knowledge as an important epistemic field that medical research unduly ignored for a long time (87).

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