



JASON LEE

**NAZISM AND
NEO-NAZISM IN
FILM AND MEDIA**

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Jason Lee

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1. Introduction – Beliefs, Boundaries, Culture

Background and Context

Despite the killing of over 6 million Jews in the Nazi death camps during World War II, there are still people throughout the world forging identities stemming from Nazi ideology. Recorded incidences of neo-Nazi attacks were increasing even before the rise of Donald Trump, and globally the popularity of neo-Nazi related groups was growing in a variety of forms in different nations. We might conclude with Primo Levi that every age has its own form of fascism. Historical parallels can be identified between the 1930s and the 1990s and beyond, however, this retrospective approach is myopic. Neo-Nazi belief is not limited to one nation or culture. The world and the media appear to be preoccupied over boundaries, with Donald Trump's rhetoric pushing this even further. As Homi Bhabha puts it, 'the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing'.¹ The building of a wall between America and Mexico has many interpretations, one being it is a form of mask for America in a futile attempt to cling onto its descending identity. Nazism and neo-Nazism are concerned with boundaries, with the media delineating many of these boundaries, even our moral boundaries.

This book concerns Nazism and neo-Nazism and film and media, recognizing media and culture have become fused, taking an approach drawn from cultural and media studies. New media platforms while spreading neo-Nazi ideologies also form part of globalization that in general is construed as a threat to local identity, with the defence being to incorporate Nazi and neo-Nazi methods. The media continually reworks conceptions of Nazism and neo-Nazism. This book analyses this process and exchange, recognizing the fluidity of the meaning of these key concepts under consideration. This opening chapter offers an overview of media and culture, the second part covering right-wing movements in European football and white separatist movements in America. Neo-Nazism in the context of European football hooliganism is a paradoxical phenomenon where there is evidence of the media driving the violence. Neo-Nazism proliferates through new media technologies but their basic nature is to be anti-organizational. Chapters 2 and 3 deal with film and television and comedy, and with how Nazism and neo-Nazism are mediated through a variety of forms, including the novel and memoir. Issues concerning authenticity, history and theory, the role of new media and technology, the

importance of the media and neo-Nazism in the era of Donald Trump, and neo-Nazism and globalization are central to Chapters 4 and 5. The concluding chapter assesses the rise of the new right in Europe.

Our argument concerns demythologizing the reporting of neo-Nazism as a theatre of extremism. Such reporting involves obfuscating the reality that neo-Nazism is often at the centre of media, culture, and society, not its fringes. Despite a reported growth in neo-Nazism, this is not a teleological development. Traversing such a wide range of media, culture and geography can raise methodological questions over the level of analysis, but the depth of this analysis throughout is accessible. While being international in scope this book does not claim to be comprehensive. Scholars such as Gavriel D. Rosenfeld have argued that there has been a gradual normalization of Nazism. There is a historical trajectory concerning images of Adolph Hitler, from the work of Heinrich Hoffman, who documented Hitler's oratorical gestures, to Internet mashups and memes, such as 'Disco Hitler'. Rosenfeld has argued there was a shift at the turn of the millennia away from a moralistic perspective on the Third Reich to a period of normalization. With the chapter in this book on comedy, it should become clear that a comical portrayal of Hitler and Nazism is not linear. But Rosenfeld does raise serious philosophical questions. Normalization of the past means no period is different from any other. This leads to certain assumptions around an abnormal past and a shift towards a desired normal past.² Taking a cultural studies approach, the thesis here is that neo-Nazism has often been at the heart of culture, focusing on Nazism and neo-Nazism in film and media, rather than Hitler's evolution.

Questions about race, racism, neo-Nazism, and identity need to be formulated in the context of the importance of the notions of personal identity being created via imitation. The contemporary media focuses primarily on Islamic terrorism, as with the attacks in London, 22 March 2017, always bracketing events in a framework as a battle with global terrorism. Acts by neo-Nazi white power terrorists, such as the killer of British MP Jo Cox in 2016, are often framed by the media as just the activities of isolated, mentally ill people. By positioning such acts as part of a process where those who may be without a voice express themselves, the media damages perceptions of the mentally ill and misrepresents the facts. Such media framing ignores the international network of neo-Nazi groups that resort to violence and can be termed terrorists. A focus on Islam can be interpreted as legitimizing the escalations of certain wars. This also raises the anti-immigration rhetoric across the world, despite the main attacker in the March 2017 London example being 'made in England', totally born and bred.

On 22 July 2011, the neo-Nazi Anders Breivik bombed a government building in Oslo, Norway, killing eight people, and shot dead 69 people in Utøya attending a Workers' League youth camp. Breivik had been to the UK, contacting the English Defence League, and maintained he was part of what he termed a war in Europe against immigration, and the spread of Islam in particular. As these events in Norway and elsewhere indicate, there remains in Europe a violent undercurrent of extremist belief. As this book reveals, this is not limited to Europe. This belief system exists in a milieu which has become characterized by violent neo-fascist nationalist rhetoric and an increased propensity for transnational discourse. The Internet has shifted neo-fascist cells from local, parochial operations to an international platform. Breivik's manifesto rapidly became a resource and inspiration to other, disparate, individuals who would otherwise have remained isolated. The neo-fascist racial religion of Wotanism can integrate with the Christian nationalism of Breivik, whilst pro-Aryan groups in Australia exchange intelligence and strategies with esoteric neo-fascists in the United Kingdom. Once repelled by globalized culture(s), the far right has prospered on the back of the technology that facilitates an increased globalism, a subject addressed here. Where fascism may once have been seen as a reaction to modernity, neo-fascism can be read as postmodern extremism: globalized, inchoate, and immersed in incompatible narratives of arguable irrationality. Behind these elements are many paradoxes, but this is also the nature of postmodernism.

People define themselves through both difference and similarity. Our belonging is framed by multiple factors, such as language and land, creating group boundaries and identities. Before we swallow the notion of the ubiquity of heterophobia, meaning all difference is wrong, other evidence needs considering, rather than concluding we are all potential neo-Nazis. What we find is that the acceptance of strangers and an ability to have empathy and be tolerant are just as prevalent in humanity as racism and prejudice.³ In this respect, if we concluded incorrectly that racism, especially anti-Semitism, is some kind of human universal, outside of time, this would be legitimizing racism. The history of the far right is not as straightforward or as clear-cut as its opponents might believe. There are overlaps between the Australian One Nation Party, some American groups (such as the American Party), and South African movements nostalgic for apartheid. Areas that have witnessed growing xenophobia in Central and Eastern Europe, such as Latvia's LNNK (For Freedom and Fatherland), and the SRS (Serbian Radical Party), have their origins stemming in independence movements.⁴

Traditional historians are concerned that the understanding of Nazism, particularly by young people, is now gained inaccurately only through

the media. This suggests history is fixed, certain and unchanging, but the synergy between historical analysis, interpretation and cultural studies is significant. As Hayden White put it, histories are ambiguous, they are 'symbolic structures, extended metaphors', and are situated in narratives we understand from literary culture.⁵ Holocaust survivor and author Elie Wiesel has explained that the problem concerns notion that mass media is profane and may trivialize a sacred subject but it also may inform and educate.⁶ From traditional literature, to films, and multimedia, including videogames, all have utilized Nazi and neo-Nazi elements, and these are discussed here. The frenzy of the visible, as Frederic Jameson called the media age, could be compared to the frenzy of imagery in Nazi culture. These debates are ongoing, and are becoming more high profile in the Donald Trump era, but have never disappeared.

Media and culture have become intertwined, infiltrating into the daily discourse of most people in the modern world, shaping identities. This is a broad area with regards to film representations, from the traditional adaptation of Shakespeare's *Richard III* (Richard Loncraine, 1995), to a controversial comedy set in a concentration camp, *Life Is Beautiful* (Roberto Benigni, 1997). History is frequently reworked in film representations, often functioning as secondary and sometimes primary source of information about historical periods. Films such as *The Reader* (Stephen Daldry, 2008) have placed debates concerning Nazism and neo-Nazism at the centre of the media and cultural discourse. Along with this, the resurgence of support for real fascist movements is disturbing, and needs analysis. With reference to thinkers such as Hannah Arendt, a refugee from Nazi Germany, and Lithuanian-born Emmanuel Levinas, what does the legacy of the past indicate about the future?

Many films, such as *American History X* (Tony Kaye, 1998), *This Is England* (Shane Meadows, 2008), and *I.D.* (Philip Davis, 1995), have powerfully shown the growth in far-right movements and their influence over youth culture. Numerous films have tackled Nazism, including *Mephisto* (István Szabó, 1981), *Das Boot* (Wolfgang Petersen, 1981), and *Heimat* (Edgar Reitz, 1994). *The Reader*, starring Kate Winslet, and *Valkyrie* (Bryan Singer, 2008), starring Tom Cruise, received immense media attention between 2008 and 2009. Winslet, who gained an Academy Award for this role, plays an ex-Nazi guard, while Cruise's character plots the death of Hitler. As with taking on the role of a disabled person, playing a Nazi appears to be an essential challenge for actors proving their worth. There have been a number of important films, such as: *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (Mark Herman, 2008), *The Counterfeiters* (Stefan Ruzowitzky, 2007), *The Pianist* (Roman

Polanski, 2002), *Downfall* (Oliver Hirschbiegel, 2004), and *Sophie's Choice* (Alan J. Pakula, 1982).

Other films, particularly of the horror genre, have Nazism as a backstory where, for example, the children of those experimented upon in Nazi camps gain supernatural powers. Like child sexual abuse, Nazism becomes a device for encapsulating absolute evil, but this is more than a simplistic plot device. This movement through transgressive trauma is presented as giving both the victim and perpetrator abilities, and is part of a theological paradigm. Through enduring the greatest of evils comes the granting of the highest form of grace and if forgiveness is granted this bestowing of grace is even true for those conducting the evil.⁷ Further victimization can occur if there is 'unproblematic identification', as Dominick LaCapra calls it.⁸ This book does not claim to be comprehensive in examining film and television but Chapter 2 explores important examples. There are countless films that use Nazi and neo-Nazi culture in interesting, but less direct ways, including the *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Steven Spielberg, 1981). In *American Beauty* (Sam Mendes, 1999), for example, Colonel Fitts (Chris Cooper) is a repressed homosexual who beats his son. The fact he collects Nazi memorabilia, which again has a comic aspect to it, is supposed to reveal his unstable character. Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993) was based on Thomas Keneally's 1982 novel *Schindler's Ark*. This is a fictional reworking of a true story and the film managed to put Nazi history back on the agenda for people of all ages, indicating the importance of the relationship between history and film. Chapter 2 explores film and television with regards to memory, authenticity and representation.

The Holocaust might not be thought to be comedic, although it has been used successfully as a context for comedy, offering a poignant juxtaposition. Aspect of this are discussed in Chapter 3. If comedy and religion went together, rather than supposedly being antithetical, then Judaism would be held up as the religion that has produced the most well-known and successful comics. Not only do we have the prolific comedian, actor, writer and director Woody Allen but numerous contemporary comedians, such as Adam Sandler. Mel Brooks' *The Producers* (1968), which concerns the musical *Springtime for Hitler*, is just one example of the apparently incongruous blending of Nazism and comedy. His film *To Be or Not to Be*, which led to the infamous 'Hitler Rap' (1983), showed just how influential Brooks' comedy was, with *The Producers* going on to be adapted as a musical, winning more Tony Awards than any other musical in Broadway history.

The comedy *Life Is Beautiful* (Roberto Benigni, 1999) concerns a Jewish Italian man Guido Orefice (Roberto Benigni) who uses comedy with his son

in a concentration camp. It was winner of the Grand Jury Prize at Cannes in 1998, plus the 1998 Academy Awards for best music, score, foreign language film, and actor. While some may have found the film offensive, it movingly raises deep philosophical questions concerning humanity, survival, family, ethics and God. This subject of Nazism, neo-Nazism, and comedy is the focus of Chapter 3; does such comedy serve a useful political purpose, such as bringing about a form of equality, if only momentarily? Aspects of Nazi culture that have been used frequently in television comedy, such as the classic 'don't mention the war' sketch in *Fawlty Towers*, are also examined. Issues concerning taste, ethics, transgression, the unmasking of authority and the purpose of comedy and laughter are tackled.

Another aim of this text is to take a moderate transnational approach, with examples drawn from mainland Europe, the UK, North and Latin America, Asia, Africa, and beyond. This approach fits with the dominance of multimedia global formats, but there is no claim that this approach is comprehensive. Contemporary re-workings of Nazism and the neo-Nazi use of media have transnational elements that deserve this approach. Along with the explicit need to examine Nazism and neo-Nazism in contemporary media, this book engages with philosophical trends. These themes include what we currently understand to be knowledge, history, memory, meaning, and truth. This is why a number of philosophers are employed here, including Henri Bergson, Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva, Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Deleuze, Emmanuel Levinas, and others, such as Hannah Arendt. Arendt came to understand the horror of totalitarianism as not having an explanation stemming from psychopathology but from the servility of its agents, 'the real basis of its truly abject status'.⁹ The core concern is how Nazism and neo-Nazism have been mediated and refashioned since the 1980s in media. A crucial aspect of this book therefore concerns the construction of truth.

Ironic and non-ironic terms, such as 'Nazi chic', 'Nazi camp' (referring to gay culture and Holocaust glamour) are now ubiquitous. Nazism and neo-Nazism is continually being mediated. The novel *The Kindly Ones* by Jonathan Littell (2006), for example, created a media sensation, selling 700,000 copies in France alone by 2007. Taking the viewpoint of an SS officer, the novel asks: Would we have behaved differently and could everyone be a Nazi under certain circumstances? Littell further inflamed media debates, when in an interview with Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* in May 2008 he accused Israel of using the Holocaust politically. He likened Israel's behaviour to that of the Nazis in the build up to World War II. Sociologist Danny Beusch has examined gay Nazi fetishism in online groups by interviewing certain members. He concludes that these groups offer tangible benefits

for exploring non-normative desires and greater experimentation. This is not framed as a ‘queerized’ utopian world given the hierarchical elements, including exclusion, reinforcing heteronormative masculinity via (over) conformity. For Beusch, this is not about contesting the signifiers of Nazi regalia, as some queer theorists maintain, but re-asserts the horrific history.¹⁰ There are many assumptions that still need to be addressed if we conclude this apparently transgressive behaviour is subversive. Further research is required into the constructed gendered and sexual identities and politics of practitioners, as well as the ways through which, ‘they frame, experience and understand their embodied sexual practice’.¹¹

While anti-Semitism is well known, and popularized in the press and elsewhere, aspects of philo-Semitism are less discussed. Aspects of Jewish culture are in the public consciousness due to the media and celebrity culture, with the likes of singer Madonna and soccer star David Beckham being involved in Jewish mysticism, and over 50 serious books on the Kabala currently available. We also have revenge narrative films, such as *Inglorious Basterds* (Quentin Tarantino, 2009), starring Brad Pitt as Nazi hunter Aldo Raine, where the divide between elite and popular culture has been crossed. Despite the Left being continually accused of anti-Semitism, in post-1968 France intellectuals fell in love with Judaism. On 21 December 1984 *Libération* published an influential article on the way intellectuals of the left of the 1970s and 1980s had made the flight from ‘Mao to Moses’. There were numerous examples, not least Jacques Derrida himself, who, along with Noam Chomsky, became an academic celebrity. Importantly, given the wider philosophical issues of this book, Derrida has been blamed for the disappearance of truth.

Highly charged debates concerning Nazism and hoaxes have made it into mainstream media and popular culture, influencing the discourse. In April 1989, German newspaper *Stern* published what became known as the ‘Hitler Diaries’. Celebrated historians verified their authenticity, despite not seeing the documents, and then they were found to be forgeries with the forgers receiving 42 months in prison. What does such a hoax reveal about the desire for ‘truth’ and the demands of journalism? How can ‘experts’ be so easily misled, and what does this say about historians? How do such hoaxes damage the writing of ‘real’ Nazi and Jewish history? And how does this feed into the conspiracy theories of neo-Nazis?

In 1995 Binjamin Wilkomirski published *Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood, 1939-1948*.¹² The author claimed to have been in two Nazi concentration camps, and to have been experimented upon for medical purposes by the Nazis. Praised, feted, and compared to Anne Frank and

Primo Levi by numerous critics, receiving the National Jewish Book Award in the US, the Jewish Quarterly Literature Prize in the UK, and the Prix Memoire de la Shoa in France. But in 2000 it was definitively proven that this book was a hoax. As with child sexual abuse 'testimony' texts, the debates surrounding this book reflected wider issues beyond Nazism and the Holocaust, such as how autobiography, memoir, and 'trauma literature' is perceived, and used by many and developed as part of 'history'.

From politicians to royalty, Nazism and neo-Nazism inflames the media. On 24 February 2006, the BBC reported Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London from 1981 to 1986 and again from 2000 to 2008, was to be suspended from office for one month for comparing a Jewish journalist to a Nazi concentration camp guard. He was then suspended from the Labour Party after an interview in April 2016 with the BBC when he apparently claimed Hitler was a supporter of Zionism in 1932 with the policy all Jews should be moved to Israel. Livingstone argued he was being attacked by the right-wing of the Labour Party over his support for Palestinian human rights and claimed he had never equated the Israeli government with the Nazis. With the UK's right-wing press dominating the media, highlighting divisions in the opposition party was essential for the ruling Conservatives to deflect criticism. The British tabloid media frequently mocks figures in the public eye and anything involving a celebrity connected to Nazism and neo-Nazism will make the news. In January 2005 Clarence House, speaking on behalf of the British royal family, made an apology in the British media over Prince Harry wearing a Nazi armband to a fancy-dress party.

There is a long history in pop culture of Nazi imagery being employed, with diverse celebrity superstars, such as Michael Jackson and David Bowie using fascist iconography in their acts. In April 2007 Bryan Ferry, former lead singer with Roxy Music, apologized in the media for praising Nazi iconography, having called their imagery 'amazing'. In March 2008 UK sensationalist (now defunct) newspaper *The News of the World* revealed it possessed video footage of Max Mosley, head of Formula One Racing and son of British wartime fascist leader and Nazi sympathiser Oswald Mosley, 'romping' at a 'Nazi orgy'. Mosley, a former barrister, won a legal case against the paper for invasion of privacy in July 2008. As with the hoax cases, this raised wider issues beyond Nazism and the Holocaust, given this became a debate about what an individual should, or should not, be allowed to do in private. Mr Justice Eady, the presiding judge, claimed Holocaust victims were not being mocked in this instance. In February 2009, Irish rockers U2 in their video to 'Get on Your Boots' overtly utilized Nazi and fascist iconography, with supposed postmodern intent. A number of popes have

negotiated Nazism in the media. Pope Benedict XVI, a former member of Hitler Youth, was attacked in parts of the media for not doing enough to heal the effects of Nazism. In 2010, prior to a trip to the UK, he claimed the Roman Catholic Church did more to help Jews than is commonly recognized, a controversial statement without historical backing or credibility.

Media images construct the myths we live by and often possess a value higher than truth. The desire for truth has not vanished, even if it seems to be harder to attain. Issues over Nazism and racism have continually made headlines, globally. US extremist groups have been linked to the British National Party (BNP). The transnational scope of neo-Nazism is well-founded and as an example is relevant due to its complexity. The BNP has parts of its origins in Britain's far-right National Front Party, and gained two seats in the European Parliament in July 2009. Questions over censorship and free speech arise in this context. In November 2007, the Oxford University Students Union invited BNP leader Nick Griffin to their 'Free Speech Forum', along with controversial historian and 'Holocaust denier', David Irving. Anti-fascist groups and the Oxford Jewish Society all protested loudly, alongside free speech groups, the resulting clash making international news.

Controversy was sparked again when the BBC's premiere political debate programme *Question Time* included Griffin as a guest. The event itself became newsworthy, with protests in 2009 outside the BBC preventing staff from leaving the building. The BBC was accused of conducting a publicity stunt to chase ratings, but even those within Griffin's party concluded his appearance on the show damaged the BNP's reputation. The use of the media to address issues connected to neo-Nazism functioned to damage supporters of certain nationalist white separatist ideologies. Overall, it would be naïve to see this period as some form of decline in nationalism and related neo-Nazism. Since this period, BNP popularity slumped further but members have been joining the right-wing English Defence League, which has stronger links with neo-Nazism. In England, the United Kingdom Independence Party is in many areas the third party, beating the Liberal Democrats. During 2017 fascism was on the rise in Hungary, and former BNP leader Nick Griffin left the UK for the Hungary, a joke in the media being that he too would now become an immigrant.

On 13 February 2009, the BBC News Channel reported that anti-Semitic attacks in England during a four-week period, that included the Israeli attacks on Gaza, were up to 250, compared to only 27 in the previous year, for the same period. In Europe, perhaps the most dramatic moment in the rise of the far right since the turn of the century came in the French presidential

elections of 2002, with Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of the neo-fascist Front National, emerging as the runner-up with 5.5 million votes. His daughter, Marine Le Pen, is now president of Front National, which is the third-largest party in France. Following the terrorist attack on London in March 2017, Marine Le Pen immediately used this as evidence to support her policies.

Right-wing parties have made substantial gains all over Europe. This support may have once seemed unimaginable, given the stigma and revulsion against fascism, extreme nationalism, and racism in the post-war period, but it is now clear that many of the beliefs held dear to the Nazis have not vanished. Russia and all the Eastern European countries have growing, extreme right parties, which are ultra-nationalist, anti-Semitic, and opposed to liberal democracies. In the first three months of 2009 neo-Nazis killed 41 people in Russia. The re-emergence of openly racist parties has complex causes, the degree and form of their racism and its blend with various types of nationalism and regionalism varying between the different countries.

Despite Donald's Trump's rhetoric while attempting to get elected, his own ideology is difficult to pin down, which was part of his effectiveness. The role and power of the media is also highly complex, hence the importance of the analysis in Chapter 5. All the extreme right parties profess a commitment to one or other version of the 'new racism', with an emphasis on nation and culture, with biological versions of 'race' forming perennial subtexts. The immediate catalyst of the success of the revived extreme right in Europe was the mobilization of insecurity and disaffection stemming from the supposed threats to the nation, and its identity and prosperity, posed by immigrants from war-stricken regions.

The Italian media is of particular interest in this context. In Italy, the 'Roms', the Gypsy community, have taken the brunt of racist attacks, and there are direct comparisons in the way Jewish people were depicted in 1930s Germany and the way certain Gypsies are portrayed today in the Italian media. Hitler, writing in *Mein Kampf* (1933), spoke of the Jew in terms of the vampire, one who waits, strikes, and sullies the living 'pure blood'. Similar language is found today in Italian media regarding the Gypsy community. The world economic crisis has added a further dimension, stirring a desire to restrict all forms of immigration throughout Europe, and this is an ongoing issue elsewhere, including America and Australia. In America, the rise of Donald Trump has also been primarily based around the theme of immigration. On both sides of the Atlantic politicians have been caught up in the anti-Semitism debate.

In the UK, with the ruling Conservative government facing strikes from doctors for the first time in history in 2016, the discovery of huge off-shore

tax avoidance schemes, multiple election fraud scandals, and a plethora of repeated paedophile scandals with high-profile figures, including politicians, the right-wing press in 2016 focused on anti-Semitism within the opposition Labour party, not for the first time. This was a tactical move by the right wing, and many Jews pointed out that questioning Israel's position towards Palestine is not actually anti-Semitism. Labelling someone a neo-Nazi is an obvious tactic in political debates, and both sides have done so.

In America, Trump has called for Muslims to be banned from entering America, but his rhetoric on immigration and race regarding Mexicans has meant other extremists have used him as their front man. What is unusual about America is that it is so clearly the country of immigration, and has prided itself in the past on this. One white supremacist with his own radio show, David Duke, a former Klu Klux Klan leader, has made a number of remarks considered to be anti-Semitic, even neo-Nazi. In 2016, the Anti-Defamation League called on Donald Trump to respond to Duke's remarks, given the latter was a follower of Trump. After Trump had taken a long time in finally distancing himself from Duke, he did eventually condemn Duke's rhetoric, claiming there was no place for anti-Semitism in America, and his mission was to unite America. Concurrently, he was using anti-immigration rhetoric to whip up commitment from primarily white working-class supporters. During Donald Trump's first press conference as president elect he accused the security services in America of hounding him, Nazi fashion.

Duke's criticism of Jewish behaviour is complex, as he has condemned the way some Jewish backers in the elections were focusing on the support for Israel, calling this anti-American. On his radio show he claimed that Jewish supremacists controlled America, and they were the real problem and the reason America was not great. Trump claimed that he has familial ties to the Jewish community, with his son-in-law Jared Kushner being an Orthodox Jew, and his daughter Ivanka converting to Judaism. Anti-Semitism is at the heart of white power in America, with neo-Nazism driving the discourse. The development of neo-Nazism via the media within European football culture indicates how the media generated neo-Nazi stories around violence. An overview of this process offers an insight into how neo-Nazi stories are generated by the media.

Football Hooligans

The category football hooligan is contentious, as is the grouping neo-Nazism. The use of any form of 'ism' needs to contain some form of a warning

regarding how this term encourages generalization, removing critical clarity and historical awareness.¹³ Neo-Nazism is not something we can easily pin down if we want to maintain historical specificity but there are general patterns that can be identified. When we consider the development of neo-Nazi belief systems it is important to consider how they are organized via gangs and movements in this context. During the 1970s in Britain, the National Front (NF) capitalized on football hooliganism. Britain gained a global reputation for its football violence, which is now emulated elsewhere, such as Russia. There was kudos to be gained by these gangs of hooligans to be regarded as the most extreme, given this meant they were theoretically the most violent and to be feared. Globally, it appears that being the most racist, and the most famous for being the most racist, is an aim of numerous related white power groups.

Despite the National Socialist name suggesting a level of altruism via socialism, the intensely competitive nature of these groups reveals a de-humanizing process. In her analysis of totalitarianism Hannah Arendt concluded that the Nazi death camps resulted from complicity due to people just being a cog in the system, removing their own responsibility. Not everyone who took part in the Nazi death camps was positively complicit, with some committing suicide, some ending up with extreme psychological disorders.¹⁴ When voting for Hitler the German people were not complicit with future genocide, but did not resist this when it happened. The level of extremism and activities that follow on from this extremism varies, but this trait of competition and game playing in subcultures is a significant cultural phenomenon.

Utilizing various methods of media has been central to the dissemination of neo-Nazi ideas in this context. The National Front (NF) youth magazine, *Bulldog*, was sold at many football grounds openly, as well as distributed in schools across the UK throughout the 1970s and 1980s. At a time of mass unemployment and social unrest, the NF appealed to young people, feeding on a sense of teenage alienation, hatred and rebellion, offering a sense of identity and a focus for mass discontent. Racial hatred was a channel for deeper levels of hatred, stemming in many cases from social inequality, but this is not the total explanation. As with the Nazi party originally, the NF wanted to 'send them back', with the desire to rid the nation of black or Asian people. What the history of racism shows is the shifting levels of acceptance, given at periods of times Jews, the Irish, and Italians have also been considered like Africans, subhuman.¹⁵

Masquerading as a party with some semblance of common sense and traditional values, through policies such as bringing back hanging and

protecting the green belt, the National Front believed all non-whites should be repatriated and removed from Britain. Outside of the National Front, earlier politicians, such as the Conservative MP Enoch Powell, well known for his 'Rivers of Blood' speech, delivered to a Conservative Association meeting in Birmingham on 20 April 1968, had promoted such policies. In this sense, the NF was not at the fringes of political discourse. A central argument of this book overall is neo-Nazism is not at the margins. The UK's NF fits the thesis of this book concerning neo-Nazism actually being within the mainstream. The Union Jack flag waving and skinhead culture was innately part of the NF, indicating how tribalism was key.

In the UK, West Ham, Chelsea, Leeds United, and Millwall were all clubs where NF symbols were adapted within merchandise to promote the political movement as part of a football supporter's way of life.¹⁶ Badges and symbols have always been part of football fandom and part of Nazi culture. Neo-Nazism carried this forward in the context of football support in various forms. There was a culture that held at its centre that a certain element of society was now being threatened. This element was perceived to be the white working or middle-class male. Hatred can have many outlets and the hatred of the other 'tribe', such as the adjacent club in the same city, can overlap with racial hatred. Celtic and Rangers in Scotland have a long-lasting religious competition that feeds into wider rivalries.

Groups and distinct parties that formed from the NF went on to some success politically, one of them being the British National Party (BNP). Their leaflets were apparently found at the stadium after the Heysel tragedy in 1985, where a collapsed wall left 39 people dead. During the 1995 match between England and the Republic of Ireland at Lansdowne Road, Dublin, it is claimed the National Socialist Alliance organized fights and incidents that led to the game being stopped after half an hour, and the BNP and Combat 18 were also both thought to be involved.¹⁷ In 1993 in the UK the Campaign for Racial Equality launched the 'Let's Kick Racism Out of Football' campaign. While the fragmentary nature of groups makes it difficult for them to carry out organized activities, it also makes them difficult to analyse, and limits preventing their activities. This has parallels with neo-Nazi groups across Europe, and with Islamic extremism, with the fragmentary network approach allowing for more invisibility. The emphasis on fans might obfuscate institutional racism in football. In August 2017 it emerged that in women's football England striker Eniola Aluko, who has 102 England caps and is a lawyer, claimed Mark Sampson, who had led England to the semi-finals of the European Championships, had made

racist comments. Aluko had already received £80,000 from the Football Association after a bullying and harassment case.

After the Heysel tragedy, the University of Leuven in Belgium published work in 1987 that tracked right-wing fans at home and abroad. Suggestions that there was an organized network of neo-Nazi supporters have been questioned and doubted, but there is tangential evidence of a process of grooming and leadership by older, more experienced fans. Old and new media are involved. The exchange of letters between young supporters and more seasoned fans is not strong evidence of an organized network at this period. This was a period before the Internet, meaning relationships between neo-Nazi fans could not be strengthened online, but simultaneously they would be less likely to be traced and the strength of relationships could be overlooked.

Extreme right-wing groups connected to a number of Italian clubs, including Bergamo, Brescia, Milan and Verona, utilized Nazi symbols, with this also being the case across Europe, especially in Spain, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Austria and France.¹⁸ In continental Europe, the most well-known teams with neo-Nazi affiliations are Lazio, AC Milan, Paris Saint-Germain, and Real Madrid and Espanole. In 2016, the media debates in Italy concerned the future of Italian football and whether away fans should be allowed to travel to matches, especially following violence between Atlanta and Roma. The excessive security in some grounds means some Ultras refuse to go to stadiums. The issue concerns whether Ultras should be criminalized but an overall conclusion from the police and football organizations is that particular football fans should not be excluded, given this can isolate and possibly escalate violence.

The media's focus during the 1980s on the English fans has led to them being emulated abroad, especially by Russian fans linked to neo-Nazi ideologies. The period itself is often interpreted as a highpoint of hooliganism, so among fans that appreciate this form of hooliganism there is a nostalgic yearning and reification of the period. Of course, structurally, the organizing of football matches during the main non-work days of the week can also be interpreted sociologically as one way of controlling workers, and preventing rioting and violence on the streets. Allowing for a frenzy of controlled real or simulated violence, and offering this in stadiums functions as a form of theatre, and offers a form of transgression that can allow the reassertion of the law.

Racism has been at the core of the violence. If it was Italian and English fans that had the reputation for being the most violent and right-wing in the 1980s, Russian fans, some known as right-wing Ultras, more recently

gained this reputation. They were deliberately escalating violence in 2016 against English and Welsh fans. Footage of Russian fans, moving in to attack English fans peacefully drinking in bars in France, causing severe injury, offers the evidence that this was organized violence of a scale that had not been seen since the 1980s. Political tensions were high in 2016, Russia having recently annexed the Crimea from the Ukraine, and President Putin taking an antagonistic stance against the West.

The British press claimed that Russia reported these attacks as a form of victory for the glorious Russians, but it needs to be noted that outlets such as *Russia Today* focused quite objectively on the violence. One nation's media attacking another nation's media is a way of generating news that concerns misinterpretations of falsities, leading us further away from the story and the truth. The role of the media is of significance, given it was reported that in Mexico in 1980s British newspaper reporters were offering money to English fans to 'smash up hotels', and then offering money to bail out fans once they had been arrested.¹⁹

Sociologists have considered the causes of the racism on the terraces, but some take a simplistic approach tied to the past when income levels for players and fans were lower. Some condemned fans as being uneducated, coming from low-income sectors, or being 'witless', tying racism to sexism and white men in general.²⁰ This denies the level of wealth generated by the game, including the wealth of the fans. Others, especially psychologists, have attempted to deal with racism on the terraces by stressing improvements in the conditions for the fans and involving them in the running of the clubs by promoting the links between clubs and the heritage of the community. In May 1989, there were 220 arrests at football matches in one weekend, one month after Hillsborough, leading some academics to swallow the story of the police and the press that the tragedy of Hillsborough had been caused by evil fans.²¹ In the UK, the government struggled to know how to deal with hooliganism post-Hillsborough, without the later revelation that all the blame put on the fans was invented.

A number of 'firms', like the Chelsea Head Hunters, have been linked to racist groups, such as Combat 18 and the National Front, and even with paramilitary groups, such as the Ulster Defence Association. These groups have been popularized in fiction, such as *The Football Factory* by John King, first published in 1996 and released as a film in 2004 directed by Nick Love. The back-cover blurb from the *Glasgow Herald* claims it is, 'a chronicle of a lost tribe – the white, Anglo-Saxon, heterosexual who is fed up with being told he is crap'.²² Whiteness is constructed as an absent centre, and within European history this stems from a denial of imperialism. It is assumed

in European culture to be without definition, boundary, and formed from comparisons between itself and others.²³ Jason Marriner, a former leader of the Headhunters, claimed that the BBC set him up, depicting him as a racist neo-Nazi with wider connections. According to Marriner on his website and in various documentaries, convictions happened without corroborating footage. Fiction has blurred with reality, with Marriner and Danny Dyer, the lead role in the fiction film *The Football Factory* (Nick Love, 2004), touring the country as 'The Real Football Factory'.

The Headhunters have not disappeared, and were involved in disturbances in Paris before a UEFA Champions League quarter final between Paris Saint-Germain and Chelsea on 2 April 2014. Around 300 hooligans were involved in pre-planned violence around the city, with hardcore hooligans having avoided police detection by entering France via Belgium. The National Front is still active, with David MacDonald, the leader of the organization, winning a seat on Aberdeen's Garthdee community council, after securing eighteen votes. The fact that this small success was news indicates that the NF is not a significant party in and of itself, but we can see its main tenets have shifted even further into the mainstream with UKIP. MacDonald apparently left the British National Party because he did not believe it was right wing enough. Drawing on Judith Duffy's report on 31 January 2017 in *The Herald*, the world media, including Reuters and Russia Today, reported that the NF had started a recruitment campaign, distributing *Bulldog* outside schools in Aberdeen. Thankfully, they had received 'disappointing' feedback, most young people, according to MacDonald, were not interested.

The NF were going to do the same in Glasgow and Dundee, and head teachers took action, forewarning parents, with the NF only approaching those aged sixteen and above. The Aberdeen Anti-Fascist Alliance branded this as a throwback to the 1970s, claiming the NF was an 'embarrassment', with no real support. The publication *Bulldog*, aimed at a youth audience, was re-launched in 2015. Interestingly, the NF's tactics of trying to engage with 'disaffected' youth can be paralleled with the tactics employed by Islamic State (IS), in their radicalization of young people. In the mid-1990s jihadi groups were permitted to distribute literature openly, in public areas such as outside shopping centres in major cities like Manchester. By 2016 if IS was to carry out similar activities, such as this by the NF, it would generate even more protest, and police action.

The nostalgia for the 1970s is a theme that unites many football hooligans and the neo-Nazi right, and the outward face of right-wing politics like UKIP, with neo-Nazi groups throughout the world believing the present is tainted.

Leicester, the home of 2016 Premiere League champions Leicester City FC, has been regarded as the most multicultural city in England. But in the 1976 UK local elections, the NF gained 20 per cent of the vote in Leicester's local elections, fielding 48 candidates, this being their high point. In April 2013, the NF intended to field 35 candidates in local elections nationally, their highest number for 30 years. One of their original policies was to leave the European Community; hence the EU referendum of June 2016 resurrected interest in the party.

During the 1970s the NF attempted an international agenda, through working with commonwealth countries, including establishing the New Zealand National Front, South African National Front, and National Front of Australia, finding it harder in Canada to formalize an NF sister organization. The gains of UKIP need to be looked at via the lens of the demise of various forms of the NF. Many examples can be given, such as councillor Victoria Ayling, who allegedly attended NF rallies, and who is recorded as stating her basic policy is to 'send people back', a central NF tenant. The mainstream British media, such as *The Sun*, has attempted to condemn movements like the NF and Britain First, separating them out from UKIP, and even the BNP. An examination of their beliefs and membership often makes such differentiation difficult to establish.

Members of the banned neo-Nazi group Combat 18, certain followers of the English Defence League, plus different members of the British National Party, are all part of this melting pot of fascism, with party allegiances not being as important as they once were. An 'ism' might be generic and non-historical, but it is undeniable that there are overlaps between these various groups. Britain First has received the greatest amount of media attention, given its controversial and confrontational style and its use of social media. Staging events, such as bursting into Muslim-owned shops and declaring the owners to be supporting terrorism, and then posting this on Facebook is one tactic. Overall, it is pointless calculating the level of virtual or real followers from this activity, given the number of views can be manipulated, as can the number of followers. What can be concluded is that support for Britain to leave the EU united followers of all these fragmented groups behind a single cause.

American Separatists

Levels of violence in America are notably higher when we consider neo-Nazi subcultures in an American context. On 25 June 2016, for example, a mass

stabbing took place at a neo-Nazi rally in Sacramento, California. Numbers vary, with estimates that 40 people took part in white power protest and were confronted with 400 in a counter-demonstration. There was believed to be nine men and one woman stabbed, ages ranging from 19 to 58 years old. The Southern Poverty Law Center, with a global reputation for investigating American extremist groups, maintained that the rally was held by a white nationalist extremist group, the Traditionalist Worker Party. They had called the demonstration to protest against the anti-Trump violence that had broken out at rallies held for Donald Trump. This presidential candidate's inflammatory anti-immigrant rhetoric had been part of the discourse that is centred on threats and violence. As with this, counter-demonstrations globally against anti-Nazis are often more supported than those by any groups with neo-Nazi sympathies. The violence at various Trump rallies appears to have been committed by white nationalists, with there being clear footage of the party's chairman, Matthew Heimbach, attacking a woman at a Trump rally. Online support came from the Golden State Skinheads.

This followed on from four people being stabbed at a Klu Klux Klan rally in Anaheim, California. With Trump taking an anti-ethnic stance from his platform, along with Nigel Farage, leader of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), stirring up hatred towards immigrants in the UK during the EU referendum, it is unsurprising that people began to act out their racist beliefs. They were now publicly being legitimized by their leaders. People born in the UK from an ethnic origin began to be on the receiving end of racist abuse. On 29 June 2016 BBC Midlands Today reported Trish Adudu was racially abused in Coventry. Importantly, she was not going to report this to the police, because she was in shock, but through discussing the incident on social media she was persuaded to report it to the police. This reveals another interesting impact of social media, because even those we do not actually know can persuade us to take action. She had not been alone, and had initially witnessed people abusing others. UKIP's leader at the time, Nigel Farage, mistakenly claimed that his Leave the EU campaign had been victorious, 'without firing a single bullet'. This was ignoring the fact that Labour Party politician Jo Cox, who had campaigned for Britain to remain in the EU, had been shot and stabbed to death on 16 June 2016 by a white separatist. It is believed that following the Vote Leave victory in the EU referendum there was an increase in racist violence in the UK. Across Europe the intense hatred of immigrants repeated by the popular press was leading to some very real violent acts that could be interpreted as neo-Nazi behaviour.

To claim that in America specifically there has been an increase in neo-Nazism does not allow for any nuances concerning the term. The relationship between neo-Nazism and celebrity is significant. One figure in the movement, Craig Cobb, personally has celebrated himself as one of the most famous racists in the world, gaining global media attention. Whether Cobb became such a virulent racist in order to become famous is an interesting question. This overlaps with the notion that Donald Trump only says extremely offensive comments to attract attention. A similar question arises concerning white separatist terrorism activity. In the age of social media, fascist groups globally have seized the opportunity to promote their ideologies and achieve notoriety.

Those who may have remained previously on the fringes of society, within their own subcultures, without access to the wider population, have been given the opportunity to enter the mainstream through social media. People can still operate from the fringes, but shifting ideologies with some core beliefs have become popularized. With the blurring of the private and the public, these ideologies have used these methods to intimidate those who may resist them. Cobb's specific aim has been to take over small towns by purchasing cheap plots of land, then moving fellow white supremacists into towns to create a majority for those supporting his extremist ideology. From these actions, the intention is then to take over town councils and local leadership groups, and gain power.

This behaviour is in tune with that stipulated by the National Alliance (NA), as portrayed by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). According to the National Alliance website, the aim is to establish new societies based on Aryan values. Explicitly, this dictates what type of culture is allowed. There is even an element of the regimes of Oliver Cromwell and the Taliban about this, which appears ludicrous. For example, specific culture is banned, while other forms are promoted: literally, no Barry Manilow and no art galleries containing Marc Chagall. Basically, no jazz and no rock are permitted, but polkas, waltzes, reels and jigs are allowed. This ignoring of contemporary culture and reifying traditional culture promotes the view that there is a certain 'pure' way of being reaching back to an original past.

In such a community, the outside world becomes a threat, any evil positioned on those who are not part of the inside group, allowing the group to then unite in its hatred of outsiders. The ongoing paradox is that contemporary methods through all forms of new media are employed in an attempt to draw people back to a mythological past, a fantasy nostalgia land devoid of all apparent threat from the other. The same tactics can be seen to be used by the United Kingdom Independent Party (UKIP) and

its sympathizers and vote leave backers, who hark back nostalgically to a mythic time, that never actually existed, always blaming 'the other' for anything wrong. This shift in the use of new media is significant in the history of allied movements.

When the American Nazi Party (ANP), formed by George Lincoln Rockwell in 1958, began vociferously attacking Jews, it was part of a wider discourse over the rights of black Americans. Conspiracy theories were spread that it was Jews who were encouraging black Americans to rape white women. The high point of Rockwell's success was in the summer of 1966 when for 22 days ANP activists gained huge publicity by disrupting Martin Luther King Jr's desegregation marches in Chicago. Over 1,000 residents attacked the marchers, shouting 'White Power!'²⁴ Then, in an attempt to broaden the appeal of the party, Rockwell changed its name to the National Socialist White People's Party (NSWPP). Rockwell's assassination on 25 August 1967 is still cloaked in a complex mystery surrounding power struggles within his movement, and allegations concerning the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). Elements of this history are relevant today, revealing the way related movements have always carried some public support, even in the mainstream, and how this consistently includes calls for a form of Armageddon. The Book of Revelation in the Bible is the most-written about text in Christianity, and America has consistently been at the cliff face of the apocalypse, according to its propagandists. This promotion of the concept of the end of the world also is situated in the context of cleansing the earth of all that is impure.

The neo-Nazi text *The Turner Diaries* is a case in point. This apocalyptic novel concerns a race war and, in 1971, years before it was published, its author, William Pierce, called for a revolution via urban warfare and political assassinations. The novel, first published in 1978 under the pseudonym Andrew Macdonald, described a future race war, where Jews and members of other reviled groups are slaughtered. Following a similar pattern to general white supremacist discourse, here the white population is depicted as persecuted and now on the margins, their rights being relinquished. Set in 1991, an underground movement goes to war against 'the System', after the Cohen Act outlaws private gun ownership, with 800,000 people arrested due to this law. Written on the cusp of the invention of the Internet, what is of note concerning the media is firstly how right-wing publishers and websites since, such as Counter Currents, have continued to critically promote the book, and how in the novel the Organization fights against the System by becoming more systematized and organized, and less fluid, as if in the future no new methods of communication exist.

The author was a scientist and the text is not multilayered, in many ways ignoring much of the more interesting developments in literary style over the twentieth century. This latter interpretation of the text, from a literary criticism and a creative writing perspective, could just indicate a lack of imagination on the part of the author, but from a political perspective it indicates a desire for a more traditional form of society, in every respect. African Americans are dismissed as lazy, a by-product of equality laws, protecting everyone's rights, including the right to do very little, while women's groups are thought to be dominated by Jewish women. There is an overt element of envy towards the Jewish population for their level of success and for feeling so at home in America. With victory at home, they have a total victory globally against the Chinese, and all 'others' resistant to the Organization. This comes in the close of the novel in the penultimate paragraph, through a process of chemical, biological, and radiological warfare over four years, 'sterilizing' 16 million square miles, creating the 'Great Eastern Waste'.

The authoritarian nature of the Organization is obvious, and this is far away from Louise Michel's notion of evil where, in the eyes of the anarchist at least, it is not about certain types of governments but the very idea of government that is evil. For the anarchist, the principle of authority is evil. This is to some degree its antithesis, and the form of this uninteresting novel is revealing, given it follows an authoritarian and traditional structure. For the neo-Nazi, absolute authority is absolute good, with a deification of the leader to the level of a god. The beauty of religion is that authority ultimately remains beyond the human, but once godlike authority is given to men all manner of fascist evils can result. One can almost view this as a post-apocalyptic novel, indicating a desire on the founder of the National Alliance for an absolute destruction of large parts of the world, in the name of white power, worshipping a new order based on Hitler.

Steve Bannon, a political activist, media executive and former Senior Counselor to President Trump, lifted his propaganda straight from this earlier context. After leaving the White House in August 2017, Bannon returned to *Breitbart News*, the right-wing website he had called the platform for the alt-right. Behind his 2011 film *Generation Zero* is a form of conspiricism. One main area is the bankers, thought to be Jewish. 'Conspiricism blames individualized and subjective forces for political, economic, and social problems rather than analyzing conflict in terms of systems, institutions, and structures of power.'²⁵ Pierce's associate Willis Carto in his newspaper *Spotlight* repeatedly claimed the ills of America and the world were down to international bankers. While Drabble claims support for white power

movements has declined since the 1970s, many more groups have sprung up, including the Aryan Nations, the White Aryan Resistance, the National Alliance (NA), and the Mountain Church. These all worship Hitler and Rockwell.²⁶

There is an overlap here with the American militia movement. The numbers who are members of this movement are difficult to establish, with estimates ranging from 20,000 to 10 million in militias.²⁷ These self-declared Christian patriots celebrate violence as central to their ideology and believe it to be admirable, which overlaps with elements of Trump's rhetoric at his 2016 rallies. Developing from the ANP, the NA was formed out of the National Youth Alliance that developed out of the Youth for Wallace organization, which backed Governor George Wallace's 1968 presidential campaign, running on a pro-segregationist platform. The NA's Pacific Northwest coordinator broke away to form a terrorist group called The Order (Silent Brotherhood, or Bruders Schwiegen) patterned on The Organization as detailed in *The Turner Diaries*, arguably the most important piece of extremist literature ever produced in America.

A decade after the main part of the novel *The Turner Diaries* is set, Pierce died in 2002 and the NA fell apart. A ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada on 9 June 2016 meant the NA did not receive a bequest of \$220,000 from the estate of Robert McCorkill, which may have been a crucial financial lifeline to resurrect the movement. The court also ordered the Canadian Association for Free Expression (CAFE), which backed the bequest to the NA, to pay the estimated \$9,000 court costs of those who had tried to halt the bequest. According to Mark Potok of the SPLC, at its peak the NA had 1,400 members, but this was now a few dozen.²⁸ In a wider context, Richard Cohen, president of the SPLC, commenting on this case, claimed that the radical right is larger than it has been in years, hence the importance of this case. McCorkill's sister Isabelle was joined by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and the attorney general of New Brunswick in the action, arguing successfully that allowing this bequest to go to a neo-Nazi group was contrary to both Canadian criminal law and public policy. Interestingly, this would not have happened in America, where freedom of speech and association protections are stronger, with Canadian law having a much fuller sense of the concept of the public good. The group is now battling within itself, and has splintered into the National Alliance Reform and Restoration Group, attempting to remove the directors of the NA, and seize its assets, including the headquarters, a compound based in West Virginia.

Despite a panic over neo-Nazism, often fuelled by the media, infighting seems to prevail for neo-Nazi groups, while its opposition appears to be more

organized. An antagonistic striving for power and dominance within groups that emphasize survival of the fittest at all costs can only be expected, but this also reflects on how assumptions about an organized network need to be questioned. Cobb's actions re-ignited groups such as Anti-Racist Action to protest against this 'exterminationist' philosophy, where anyone not fitting Cobb's idea of a 'pure' European American should be killed. The resistance to such an ideology is strong and it unites disparate groups. In the American context, this includes the African-American communities, the non-extremist white communities, and the Native American communities. These combined latter groups are in the majority, and believe in equality and rights for all. This in itself has, however, created antagonisms, both in America with the rise of Donald Trump, and in Europe with the popularity of groups who believe the systematic implementation of a human rights agenda is akin to being dictated to. The latter has been one of the main arguments of UKIP.

Associates of Cobb's are members of the National Socialist Movement who, as with the Nazis, often portray themselves as victims who believe they are now in a minority and are persecuted. Within this ideology all systems are dominated by an evil source, normally Zionist in origin. The switching of the victimhood role here is telling, and the extent the media is utilized noteworthy. Throughout all of this activity, Cobb was courting the media, and using the Internet prolifically for nefarious purposes, such as posting the personal details of any neighbour or potential enemy. The revealing of personal details might not appear that problematic, given anyone spending time on the Internet can normally find specific details on most people, if they choose. This was, however, to highlight certain people who could then be perceived as enemies of Cobb's associates within the white power movement, and once you were on his list then you were in danger from a wide range of extremists. More importantly, in this context, it is the extent of this use that is most revealing.

Cobb's use of the Internet is significant, with him spending sometimes 20 hours a day online, this being what can be considered a central weapon of his arsenal. In an age when the Internet dominates, this level of use may not appear strange or extreme but it indicates how this form of technology has absorbed leaders within extremist neo-Nazi movements. The original utopianism concerning much discourse on this technology needs to be more balanced. While it is important to avoid generalizations and clichés, Cobb's claim that he may have some form of Asperger's links to this asocial behaviour, and his obsessive use of computers. He personally promotes the view that his knowledge and use of the Internet is somehow supernatural, and this gives him mystical powers.

The only way to retaliate was for groups who were demonized by Cobb, including his white neighbours who had never encountered such racist groups before or even knew such groups existed, to similarly engage with complex media and surveillance techniques. In some instances, this was of a professional standard. This included recording all significant activities and movements of known neo-Nazis and self-confessed National Socialists, including events and incidents at town meetings, and any activity that could be conceived as threatening. A central reason to create such tensions, one can only assume, was to drive those antithetical to Cobb's views from the town they called home. The main town that Cobb attempted to seize was Leith in North Dakota which, from a 2010 census, had a population of just sixteen, and theoretically could offer little resistance to an influx of white supremacists. Those who may have moved to Leith to live a quiet unobserved life, outside the mainstream, were now under close and intense scrutiny, and were then driven to utilizing similar observational techniques in their defence.

The clear dream of many of the inhabitants had been to live a life of freedom, sacrificing the benefits of modern life for the benefits of living away from any metropolis. There is no autonomy under observation, so in this remote area residents were now in a prison-like environment, constantly observed, without any freedoms. On top of this, residents believed their children were under threat, as Cobb and his associates used threats and menacing behaviour to intimate people, in what only can be construed as an attempt to encourage people to move. The extent of the dominance from white power followers is debatable, but their overt and blatant promotion of their beliefs cannot be overlooked. In such circumstances, the quality of life of the residents was exponentially diminished. A town of people that, perhaps naively, trusted other people's good intentions was forced into acknowledging any stranger may have an antagonistic purpose, which could be life-threatening to others. What could not have been predicted was how extreme the new neighbours' beliefs were.

At first, local residents thought Cobb was just a lonely eccentric man who was a self-contained introvert. They respected him for this, and then allowed him to become a quiet member of their community without realizing he would go on to threaten them and their children with guns and attempt to establish a white supremacist neo-Nazi community. Interestingly, in some respects Cobb's group had gone even further than the Nazis in their beliefs. These were kept on the fringes of fantasy and the imagination, and not especially acted out in reality, but they did have an international impact, reflecting on the wider attraction and promotion of neo-Nazism through

a variety of methods. Despite the small-town nature of these activities, as exemplified in the 2015 Netflix documentary *Welcome to Leith*, which focused on the subject, and predominantly on the character of Cobb, the global reach of this phenomenon, through the media of course, is worth considering. We have already seen how National Socialism in a variety of forms has an international element, especially in areas of Russia, as exemplified by the stated beliefs of certain football fans. Cobb himself became a global media phenomenon, which may have been his original intention, given his desire to be the most famous racist in the world.

At town meetings, where Cobb attempted to gain a majority, and tried to take over governance, the British media, such as Sarah Collins from *The Mail Online*, were present. Cobb often comes across as mentally ill, or at least pretending to be insane, rushing around the town hall with a lap top, thrusting it into people's faces, in an attempt to intimidate people. The central focus of the global media questioning was over how people were now living in fear, after living an apparently quiet life. The subtext is that this phenomenon can appear from apparently nowhere, and people need to be more vigilant. Some residents had deliberately moved to Leith to perhaps escape and start a new life, such as one man whose daughter had been murdered. Cobb and his associates hounded and threatened these people intensely, using their previous history and new media technology against them. Cobb even appeared on the British chat show *Trisha*, in front of a mainly black audience with a black host, where the results of his DNA test revealed he is actually 14 per cent African. That such a known racist and hater of black people should be part-African was paradoxical, and Trisha and others on the show found this highly amusing. 'See, you got the black man in you,' was repeated at him with laughter, and Cobb appeared to sense the paradox and the humour in this.

Eventually, Cobb and an associate were charged in November 2013 of three counts of terrorism. After threatening the people of Leith with guns, he was banned for life from holding firearms and from contacting those he had been harassing through any methods. Luckily, the legal system in this case had caught up with the technological age and recognized the use of the Internet for hate crimes. The residents believed that justice was not served and they had been duped, given Cobb offered a plea bargain, apologized, and was released from prison, having served his time waiting for the court case. As soon as he was released, on camera during the making of *Welcome to Leith*, Cobb stated that they must regret releasing him, given he was still peddling a race hatred ideology, promoting the white power doctrine. Cobb's behaviour may appear eccentric, but it gained him further publicity, and

it does touch on other forms of racist belief that have been growing rapidly during an age of mass migration, globalization, and the Internet.

Cobb and his associates claimed that it was the white people that were being persecuted and were now in the minority. This is not a particularly uncommon view. For example, in the debates over whether Britain should leave the European Union, it has been claimed that in some schools, especially in urban areas like London, English is not the first language and that white people are in the minority. First the National Front, then the British National Party, and now the United Kingdom Independence Party and English Defence League, all utilized the term 'white flight' to promote the view that places were being 'invaded' by other races and an indigenous way of life was being destroyed. This can lead to the notion that the white race is the victim, ignoring a whole history of racism, colonization, and oppression.

Cobb portrayed himself as a victim, suggesting that his 'weird' behaviour, as he put it, came from his military upbringing and from his mild Asperger's. Not everyone with this type of background becomes a high profile, dangerous neo-Nazi, leading a group of people who maintain all 'others' need to be murdered. According to the Southern Poverty Law Centre there are hundreds of thousands of Americans with these beliefs, part of the Creator movement, believing Aryan men are god, literally worshipping themselves. The political rise of Donald Trump in 2015 can be considered in this context, every racist comment bringing him more support from audiences across America. This, for some like documentary maker and political agitator Michael Moore, is merely the 'last roar of the dinosaurs', but such a view ignores the popularity of Trump, which reveals the ideals of the American dream have not succeeded. What was supposed to be a melting pot has turned into a standoff between so-called whites and so-called 'others'. Since the attack on the Twin Towers on 9/11 the focus of American government funding went to attempting to reduce Islamic extremism, shifting funding away from white extremists, but earlier related incidents need to be briefly considered.

The accusation of child sexual abuse was made against David Koresh, leader of the Branch Davidian sect. An accepted story is that after the FBI killed 76 members of the group, including 27 children, at the culmination of the Waco siege on 19 April 1993. Timothy McVeigh took it into his own hands to seek revenge for these murders, although he claimed personally this was not the cause of his actions. Like Cobb, McVeigh had a military background, but he was viewed also as a war hero. Unlike Cobb, McVeigh denied working with others and claimed personal responsibility for all his actions.²⁹ As Gore Vidal has shown, the members of the Davidian Church

put on trial for ‘conspiracy to commit murder’ after being attacked by federal agents, were found to be innocent of this charge, but eight innocent people were still sentenced to up to 40 years for lesser charges. Vidal was one of only a few people to try to ascertain exactly why McVeigh carried out the 19 April 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, containing the FBI, which killed 168 people, and injured over 800. Wild, media-driven discourse attempted to personify McVeigh as the epitome of evil, monstrosity incarnate.

Neo-Nazi material, such as *The Turner Diaries*, were found in McVeigh’s possession, or at least this is the line that was actively promoted by government agencies and the media, desperate to find a cause behind this act. In a letter to Vidal, McVeigh explains his actions were not revenge over Waco at all. *The Turner Diaries* was more of a sideshow in this narrative, and taken a step further it might be suggested they were planted. Vidal pointed out that McVeigh’s obsession was with the militia and with guns, not with hatred of Jews. What is of significance is how, for Vidal, McVeigh functioned antithetically to the American idea that all behaviour is out of self-interest. Furthermore, doctors had proclaimed him not deranged but serious, with the conclusion being he had an exaggerated view of justice, his bomb just part of a war going on, equivalent to America bombing Iraq.³⁰ McVeigh’s views, if held by a non-American, may not appear that extreme. Millions of people globally believed and still believe that America’s and the West’s policy in the Middle East and elsewhere is essentially wrong.

There are clear parallels to be drawn. Anti-government militia movements increased from 220 in 1995 to more than 850 by 1996, according to Vidal, with the rumour being spread that the government had planted the bomb to justify anti-terrorism legislation.³¹ With any atrocity a simplistic argument is to blame the government. Vidal notes that while *The New York Times* made mileage of skinhead neo-Nazi militias enhancing their base in such a climate, no parallel was made between the burning down of the Reichstag in 1933, which allowed Hitler to enforce the Enabling Act giving him dictatorial powers. Cries of a neo-Nazi conspiracy are often offset by cries of further conspiracies. Vidal, quoting Adam Parfrey, notes that this bombing can be seen as no different from pseudo Viet Cong units that raped and murdered Vietnamese to discredit the National Liberation Front, fake ‘finds’ of Communist weapons in El Salvador and so on. Parts of the conspiracy overlap with those concerning 9/11. For example, no one from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), a federal law enforcement organization within the US Department of Justice, located on the ninth floor of the building, suffered casualties. Many ATF agents

were not at work on the day of the attack, raising the question whether the ATF had advance warning.

Thorough forensic work on the building was not carried out, with evidence quickly destroyed, according to these theorists. This then led to President Bill Clinton signing the Anti-Terrorism Act, curtailing freedoms. Vidal's work is convincing, especially when he outlines that the FBI did not follow up on evidence, how they withheld evidence from the defence teams, and through his own investigations he finds people involved in the case the FBI ignored. For Vidal, the fact the case makes no sense makes it the 'perfect' crime. Vidal appears to have sympathy with the conspiracy theorists. For example, he quotes military generals who witnessed the carnage who confirmed it could only have been carried out by bombs strapped to the building and detonators, in an organized fashion way beyond McVeigh's means. This is also a view attached to the attack on the Twin Towers.

Stressing the role of mediated and mediatized activism, Rikke Alberg Peters has explored the neo-fascist network The Immortals (*Die Unsterblichen*), who have utilized a variety of new media platforms, including YouTube. Through doing so, Peters emphasizes ethno-nationalism as the wider paradigm to understand these movements. On 1 May 2011 people gathered dressed in black cloaks in Bautzen, Germany, for a march carrying torches and launching a campaign known as 'Become Immortal!' (*Werde unsterblich!*). Like Cobb, this protest was linked to the belief that there was a threat to the people, in this case the German people, and this was a rejection of liberal democracy. As Peters shows, mediated social and political protest often refer mainly to left-wing movements. These are known for focusing on environmental issues and anti-globalization efforts, for example. It is only natural that right-wing groups would also utilize these methods, so this is not a revelation, but some important areas need to be highlighted. One might think that this new tool would help to unify movements, but:

Although their self-representations on different social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Flickr would suggest that this is a well-established nationalist far right organization their subcultural and heterotopic form indicate that this is rather a form of collective action or a protest phenomenon than an actual organized group lest a political or social movement.³²

This is a reaction against organized politics, and is more a deliberate protest against what is seen as the elite. In this sense, organization that is overt is against the principles of the movement. Government forces have a vested

interested in highlighting excessive and organized home-grown extremism, as well as foreign and external extremism, given that it enables them to implement strong powers to include populations. Simply, it allows a blame culture to emerge. There is, however, an overlap between these movements across Europe and beyond. With Cobb, there is the promotion of an 'ethno-nationalist myth of a golden past'.³³ The desire for a cleansing is high on the agenda, but this belief has been with human nature throughout history, as evidenced by certain parts of the Old Testament where tribes not part of the chosen race, a form of the immortals, are anathema.

Manipulation is central to these developments; for example, in terms of the actual making of the content, rallies appear much larger than they are and soundtracks are employed to bolster their dramatic impact on the audience.³⁴ Engaging with the zeitgeist, this move from biological and cultural racism to ethno-nationalism has proven to be highly successful. What 'mediated mobilization' means is that new media is not merely a form of communication but it is now in itself, 'constitutive of action and physically manifests the political ideas'.³⁵ While standard neo-Nazi rallies were formulated along very traditional hierarchical lines, the looseness of organization here means greater participation, through a do-it-yourself ethic. Combining virtual and street protest, without violence and bullying, it can be suggested that this has a deeper, long-term impact. Interestingly, it is the multifaceted nature that is also a key element of the success, given people can join protests through physical or virtual actions, but they do not have to abandon other allegiances. Ontologically, this may be a more authentic way of being because paradoxically it tunes into the multifaceted aspect of human nature.

Today we are all producers, and in this fascist movement and many other neo-Nazi movements, this level of engagement means people are finding a purpose and a way of exploring and communicating their identities through complex and overlapping methods. Time and place may not be as central now. The phrase 'may be more authentic' is stressed, given the ability to hide via new media, which could actually be inauthentic. What is significant is that there is now a blurring between producers and receivers, and activists and followers, and this means that the audience may be much wider. You do not have to sign up to far-right ideologies to become involved, as you might just have an interest in being anti-elite, using new media to provoke change. The use of the address 'you' here is appropriate, given this is exactly how The Immortals address their audience through their different methods, again to encourage personal activism away from the mainstream. Analysis of blogs and forums, for example, used by the North Belgian post-fascist

movement reveal how these new forms allow networking that transcends boundaries of time and space, and the clips on YouTube allow for a certain form of 'immortality'.³⁶

This opening chapter has outlined the parameters of this book with regards to Nazism, neo-Nazism, film and media, explaining the importance of identity formation and the transnational perspective. An essential paradigm proposed here is that neo-Nazi discourse has become part of the mainstream. Questions were raised over the use of the term 'Nazi' and the popularizing of Nazi chic. European football hooliganism, the media and neo-Nazism has been explored, moving onto the American context and white separatism. It has been noted how the media invented and exaggerated aspects of football violence with the neo-Nazism in football both a real and imagined phenomenon. We have seen how the science fiction book *The Turner Diaries* has been a seminal text in the development of American neo-Nazism and the early development of neo-Nazism in America has been outlined. The complexities around conspiracy theory have been explained, especially concerning the white separatist Timothy McVeigh. The potential of new media to promote neo-Nazi ideas has been delineated. At the start of this chapter a variety of films and television programmes were introduced. The following chapter deals with this subject in greater depth, asking whether they do offer a greater understanding, as Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel hopes.³⁷