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“Playing Native”

Feminist Critiques on Ecofascist, Nativist Appropriations of Indigeneity since 2016

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M.A. Final Project

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Abstract

This project explores recent manifestations of ecofascism within right-wing movements that deploy environmental concerns and rhetoric. Immigrants in the United States and in Europe and other global North countries have long been targeted by xenophobic policy and rhetoric guised as environmental protection. Although investigations by critical scholars including feminists on right-wing environmentalism unveiled the nativism and hate behind green agendas that are inherently anti-immigrant, I analyze recent ecofascist rhetoric and visual discourse for their harm to Indigenous communities, which is equally insidious, if less overt. This project engages with manifestos of extremists, right-wing political websites, and on-the-ground footage of alt-right mobilizations, to determine the presence of ecofascists and how they “play native.” I postulate that both immigrants and Indigenous communities alike are negatively impacted by these discourses.

Introduction

When 28 year old Brenton Tarrant carried out a terrorist attack against Muslims attending mosque services in Christchurch, New Zealand, on 15 March 2019, he posted his 87 page manifesto online prior to turning on his livestream. Tarrant, an Australian man living in New Zealand, wrote in his manifesto, “if there is one thing I want you to remember from these writings, it's that birth rates must change. Even if we were to deport all non-Europeans from our lands tomorrow, the European people would still be spiraling into decay and eventual death.”

Months after Tarrant killed 51 people and injured more than 40, on 3 August 2019, 21 year old Patrick Crusius committed an act of terrorism against “Latino invaders” at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas. Crusius was heavily inspired by Tarrant’s acts of terrorism, and in his own manifesto, posted to a right-wing online platform, 8Chan, praised the Christchurch mosque shootings and encouraged others to commit similar acts of hate against immigrants.

Tarrant and Crusius, and others with similar, radicalized views, can be characterized as ecofascist. These individuals are influenced by a near century-long alarming relationship between environmentalist and white supremacist ideologies (including nativism, fascism, and nationalism, among other ideologies). These influences largely originate from histories of environmental propaganda used by the Nazi party during the Third Reich’s rise to power. Within the United States, environmental conservationist figures like John Muir, who co-founded the Sierra Club, and Theodore Roosevelt, propagated nativism. Nativism has, historically, been an exclusively American concept, routinely used to justify xenophobic policy and prejudices against immigrants, particularly Catholic immigrants from Ireland and Germany, who were portrayed as threats to “native” protestant, white Americans. However, nativism has also been constantly evolving, based on who is considered “native” to the USA. Nativism claims a Euro-American

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3 8Chan is a website consisting of user-created message boards, which shut down in 2019 shortly after the El Paso domestic terrorist attack. However, the website was re-uploaded under the name 8kun, and has been a notable platform for alt-right sympathizers and white supremacists to communicate online.

4 Abutelab, “What's Inside The Hate-Filled Manifesto Linked to The Alleged El Paso Shooter.”


6 Friedman, “What is a Nativist? And is Donald Trump One?”
belongingness to land, which also impacts indigenous communities, by erasing the presence of 
tribal communities, and by placing settler colonial, white Americans as “native” in the place of 
First Nations peoples.

Later in the 20th century, the Nazi party used environmental propaganda during the Third 
Reich’s rise to power. After World War II, neo-nativist influences included figures such as John 
Tanton, and associated nativist organizations, or “Tanton Network,” such as the Federation for 
American Immigration Reform (FAIRUS), Californians for Population Stabilization (CAPS), 
and the Social Contract Press. Most recently, the resurgence in outward fascist and nativist 
rhetoric as a result of the Donald Trump presidency has renewed ecofascist mobilization. This is 
especially significant in light of the 6 January 2021 insurrection on the United States Capitol. 
While the majority of Americans cannot be described as ecofascist, the resurgence and 
normalization of ecofascist values is concerning.

As a white woman in the United States, who follows a neo-pagan belief system, I 
recognize there is privilege in analyzing how immigrant and Indigenous women and 
communities have been targeted by extreme right-wing political mobilizations. However, neo-
pagans claiming anti-racism and anti-settler colonialism as I do ought to work to reveal the ways 
alt-right figures and organizations have co-opted religious and cultural symbols. It is important 
for people in positions of privilege not only to acknowledge when they are complicit with 
systems of structural oppression, but also to work towards their deconstruction. Many 
Americans, including myself, came into political consciousness during (if not as a result of) the 
Trump presidency. The 2016 USA presidential election, alongside the ecofascist, terrorist attacks 
in El Paso (Texas, USA), Christchurch (New Zealand), as well as political mobilizations during

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7 Rajani Bhatia, “Green or Brown? White Nativist Environmental Movements” in Home-Grown Hate: 
Charlottesville’s “Unite the Right” rally and the 2021 Insurrection have exposed the continuously growing threat of white supremacist mobilizations. Further, policies enacted during the Donald Trump administration, particularly in relation to immigration, and the environment, have also contributed to my interests in analyzing these mobilizations.

By drawing on indigenous feminist critiques of settler colonialism intrinsic to an environmental reproductive justice (ERJ) framework, I will analyze the ways that ecofascists and other forms of right-wing environmentalists “play native,” not only by claiming an exceptional, if not originary, connection to Euro-American lands, but also by appropriating aesthetics of indigeneity to promote their anti-immigrant agendas. ERJ uses intersectional analysis to combine the frameworks of Environmental Justice (EJ) and Reproductive Justice (RJ) to expand discourse of systemic justice beyond the direct perspectives and discourse of each individual framework. Both movements are also grounded in intersectional frameworks, aiming to shift narratives from discourses around individual “choice” to systemic change, as well as highlighting the historical constructions around these movements, particularly histories of white supremacy. While ERJ addresses some of the most pressing environmental concerns for those most impacted by climate change and environmental degradation, it also provides the conceptual basis from which I critique ecofascist rhetoric and confront eco-fascist ideology and normalization.

**Literature Review**

This project engages with several bodies of literature, including feminist perspectives and other critiques of right-wing environmentalism, and Indigenous feminism and Environmental

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Reproductive Justice (ERJ). Per Giovanna Di Chiro, ERJ includes radical and socialist feminisms, antifascist and postcolonial frameworks, alongside foundational feminist frameworks such as intersectionality. It is important to note that intersectional analysis, alongside frameworks brought forth by postcolonial, radical and socialist feminisms derive from Black and antiracist feminisms. This can also be said of the activist efforts of Latina/Chicana and Indigenous feminists. Some questions that guide this literature review include: How has critical scholarship defined ecofascism, and its connections to the ‘greening of hate’? How does it situate these ideologies within larger right-wing political movements? What are the critiques of ecofascist ideological standpoints and do they implicate settler colonialism in addition to anti-immigrant, white supremacist politics?

I. Defining Ecofascism and the ‘Greening of Hate’

Michael Zimmerman explains in *The Threat of Ecofascism* that, to merit the name “ecofascism”,

A radical ecology movement would have to do more than demand that ecologically vital private property be protected from those who would despoil it. In addition to portraying ecological despoliation as a threat to the racial integrity of the people, an ecofascist movement would have to urge that society must be reorganized in terms of an authoritarian, collectivist leadership principle based on masculinist-martial values.

In short, ecofascism is the intersection of environmentalism and fascism. Zimmerman argues that while the majority of American environmentalists cannot be described as ecofascists, there are

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10 Notable authors include Barbara Smith (of the Combahee River Collective), Audre Lorde, Angela Davis, bell hooks, Gloria Anzaldúa, among many others.
legitimate reasons to be concerned over the possible emergence of something like ecofascism in years to come.\textsuperscript{12}

The “greening of hate,” is a phenomenon that Betsy Hartmann and others define in relation to the USA as the scapegoating of immigrants for environmental degradation, “giving nativism an environmental twist.”\textsuperscript{13} More specifically, Hartmann claims that proponents of this phenomenon contend that “immigration, by spurring USA population growth, drives environmental degradation,” by causing “everything from traffic congestion to deforestation to accelerated greenhouse gas emissions.”\textsuperscript{14} Joe Turner and Dan Bailey analyze similar sentiments in relationship to Europe, which they refer to as “ecobordering.” The authors argue that this position, like the “greening of hate,” is based on “fallacious depictions of migrants, an ignorance of material economic drivers of ecological degradation, and a narrow focus on ‘national’ nature, seeking to encourage reactionary nationalistic responses to environmental crises.”\textsuperscript{15} The ultimate purpose, according to Turner and Bailey, is to rationalize the securitisation of regional, national, and property borders in the name of environmental protection.\textsuperscript{16} Alongside “ecobordering” and the “greening of hate,” in this project I will discuss core ideas that influence ecofascism such as neo-Malthusian discourse, nativism, nationalism, and eugenics. Forms of alt-right radicalization, including neo-Nazi and Volkisch movements, which incorporate environmentalism all hold similar goals or agendas: to preserve “European soil” for the “European people,” or rather, the preservation of white supremacy over the natural landscape. A deeper look at the historical

\textsuperscript{13} Betsy Hartmann, \textit{The America Syndrome: Apocalypse, War, and Our Call to Greatness} (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2017): Print.
\textsuperscript{14} Hartmann, \textit{The America Syndrome} (2017): p. 192.
constructions and development of these movements is worth examining in order to critique ecofascist discourse.

II. Origins of Ecofascism- Historical Constructions and Actors

The connections between environmentalism and fascism are neither modern nor new, according to Janet Biehl and Peter Staudenmaier in *Ecofascism: Lessons From The German Experience*. However, a historical analysis about the prior ideologies that influenced the fascist movement is just as necessary to understand how these discourses have been utilized over a longer period of time, prior to the rise of fascism, and the impacts since its 20th century inception. The origins of this rhetoric date back to the late 18th century, to the Reverend Thomas Robert Malthus (henceforth Malthus). Malthus argued in a series of essays that culminated in his 1798 work, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, that human population growth, if left unchecked, would inexorably outstrip resources, specifically food resources. Further, Malthus argued that this constant battle is the major cause of hunger, poverty, environmental degradation, and war. Jade Sasser argues in *On Infertile Ground* that “although Malthus was not the first to make these arguments, he was the first to synthesize political and scientific arguments about population into one coherent theory.” Malthus was certainly not the last to utilize fears over resource scarcity in relation to perceived unchecked population growth, particularly population growth outside of a white majority.

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Peter Staudenmaier and Janet Biehl lay out the historical origins of ecofascism through the social movements in Germany prior to and during the rise of Nazi power. More specifically, Staudenmaier dissects how environmental social movements like the völkisch movement and wandervögel youth movement, which originated prior to the rise of Nazi influence in Germany, were co-opted by or eventually “absorbed” by the Nazi party during Adolf Hitler’s rise to power. Environmental values, evident in phrases like “blood and soil” and the fascination with “nature mysticism” and “Germanizing” Germany among high ranking Nazi officials including Hitler, contributed to the atrocities of the Holocaust.21 According to Biehl and Staudenmaier, the National Socialist “religion of nature” was, “a volatile admixture of primeval Teutonic nature mysticism, pseudo-scientific ecology, irrationalist anti-humanism, and a mythology of racial salvation through a return to the land.”22

The role of white supremacist ideology within the environmental movement is not exclusive to Germany during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Scholars like Betsy Hartmann, Jade Sasser, Jessica Leann Urban, Joe Turner and Dan Bailey analyze the role of white supremacy and eugenics during the early environmental movement within the United States. Figures like John Muir, who founded the Sierra Club, a notable environmentalist organization with influence into the modern day, have been extensively critiqued by anti-racist environmentalists and EJ activists/scholars as holding white supremacist beliefs.23 Additionally, figures like Muir were the architects of the myth of pristine nature, wherein man and the natural environment are separate, and only white citizens should be allowed access to these spaces.24

22 Biehl and Staudenmaier, “Ecofascism”, pp. 11-12.
According to Hartmann and Sasser, Muir saw the project of removing and resettling Native Americans onto reservations as necessary to the conservation of wilderness, and described Native Americans as dirty and degraded in his travel journals. Political actors during this period, including President Theodore Roosevelt, who has been historically praised by mainstream environmentalists for his conservation efforts, also held similar perspectives to that of Muir’s in regard to the myth of pristine nature. It is important to note the real displacement and cultural assaults against Indigenous tribes and First Nations within the North American continent during this time, as legacies of “manifest destiny” and westward expansion came to fruition through the 19th century and early 20th century.

Figures like Roosevelt and Muir were architects of not only the mainstream environmental movement, but also the nativist movement. The nativist movement, which has been intertwined with the environmental movement, is motivated by policy that prioritizes the interests of the “native-born” or citizens of the United States. This movement, while touting the protection of citizen concerns, is in reality protecting the interests of white, USA born citizens, by preserving structures of racial inequality in the United States. It is also important to emphasize the impacts of the nativist movement on Indigenous communities and First Nations within the North American continent during this time. Myths of pristine wilderness untouched by mankind was used to rationalize the displacement of Indigenous communities by European settler colonists. Forceful displacement onto reservations were notable (but often historically suppressed) actions taken by federal officials prior to and during the environmental movement,

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with notable legislation like the “Indian removal” programs to create national parks under Roosevelt’s administration. As demonstrated in the findings, environmentalism itself can be a means of “playing Native.”

The nativist movement evolved throughout the 20th century, through the influence of Muir and Roosevelt on later generations of white supremacist “environmentalists” including Garrett Hardin, John Tanton, and notable biologist, Paul Ehrlich. They built a significant following and support base by appealing to neo-Malthusian rationales in their advocacy for anti-immigrant “reform” and population control policy. John Tanton, who scholars consider the “architect” or “founder” of the modern day anti-immigrant movement, took up neo-Malthusian and nativist discourse through the guise of environmental conservation. Tanton was instrumental in the development of the modern day “greening of hate,” wherein immigrants are scapegoated for environmental degradation. Tanton, Hardin, and Ehrlich all follow Malthus by utilizing the notion of resource scarcity to invoke fears of population growth and instill anxiety surrounding limited “carrying capacity” as a means of scapegoating international migration, and specifically immigrants’ reproductive agency, for environmental degradation.

III. Critical Anti-Fascist and Feminist Perspectives on the Greening of Hate

Emmi Bevenese and Alexander Reid Ross build from Zimmerman’s 1995 work, in their 2020 Confronting the Rise of Ecofascism Means Grappling with Complex Systems. Discussing the August 2019 Walmart shooting in El Paso, Texas (United States), Ross and Bevenese note

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that the El Paso shooter, Patrick Crusius, was inspired by the Christchurch (New Zealand) shooter from 15 March 2019.\textsuperscript{35} The authors go on to emphasize that “transnational messages of hate” like those in the terrorists’ manifestos have “become all too mainstream,” connecting the anti-immigrant rhetoric ratcheted up by former President Donald Trump and Fox News correspondent Tucker Carlson, to the hate-filled manifestos posted by extremist shooters like Brenton Tarrant and Patrick Crusius through online platforms.\textsuperscript{36} Since the Christchurch shooting, according to Ross and Bevenese, searches for the term “ecofascism” on search engines like Google surged in popularity, while online social media platforms like Reddit and Twitter posts related to ecofascism began to increase, followed by another surge after the El Paso shooting.\textsuperscript{37} A rise in online discussions about ecofascism further increased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, due to shifts in local landscapes as a result of lockdowns, and some online users referencing humans as a virus.\textsuperscript{38}

Biehl and Staudenmaier emphasize that a love of the natural world is in itself an innocent and legitimate conviction, “and it is by no means a historical necessity that it be permutated into a justification for mass murder. Nor is ‘ecology’ limited to an interpretation as a social Darwinist racial jungle, or politicized along tribal, regional, and nationalist lines.”\textsuperscript{39} Simply put, caring for the environment does not preclude or excuse fascist sympathy. Unfortunately, as many ERJ scholars point out, language that implies, if not condones/tolerates white supremacist rhetoric is not uncommon within the mainstream environmental movement, as the mainstream


\textsuperscript{36}Reid Ross and Bevenese, “Confronting the Rise of Ecofascism”. p. 5.

\textsuperscript{37}Reid Ross and Bevenese, “Confronting the Rise of Ecofascism”. p. 6.

\textsuperscript{38}Reid Ross and Bevenese, “Confronting the Rise of Ecofascism.” p. 6.

\textsuperscript{39}Biehl and Staudenmaier, “Ecofascism.” p. 44.
environmental movement has left out communities most vulnerable to environmental impacts.\textsuperscript{40} Reid Ross and Bevenese warn that as climate change becomes more apparent, right-wing environmentalists distance themselves from denialism, adopting and foregrounding aspects of green politics to advance their goals. Political affiliation is not enough to resist fascism.\textsuperscript{41}

As already described, Betsy Hartmann defines the \textit{greening of hate} as the scapegoating of immigrants for environmental degradation, or, the “keep them at home” position of the anti-immigrant movement.\textsuperscript{42} According to Hartmann, this position of framing environmental policy is wrong, as it diverts attention from the overconsumption and responsibility of well-off Americans, and assumes that all immigrants will become super consumers once entering the United States.\textsuperscript{43} Additionally, Hartmann interrogates apocalypticism in the green of hate, which perpetuates theories of food scarcity and a globalized “population bomb.”\textsuperscript{44} Malthusian theory and apocalyptic thinking have become so pervasive, according to Hartmann: “ask almost any American, liberal or conservative, young or old, man or woman, and you’ll find the belief that overpopulation is a big problem.”\textsuperscript{45} It is clear that political positions in favor of the \textit{greening of hate} in the United States are not about environmental protection or restoration, but rather about immigration and limiting specific populations of people. Hartmann’s work argues “when all is


\textsuperscript{41} Reid Ross and Bevenese, “Confronting the Rise of Ecofascism” 7-8.


\textsuperscript{43} Hartmann, “The Greening of Hate” in \textit{Greenwash} (2010): 13-14

\textsuperscript{44} The “population bomb” is a term attributed to American environmentalist Paul Ehrlich, from his well-known and widely published \textit{The Population Bomb}, originally published by the Sierra Club. \textit{The Population Bomb} became the best-selling ecology book of the 1960s, outselling Rachel Carson’s \textit{Silent Spring}. Heidi Beirich and Mark Potok discuss these topics in \textit{Greenwash: Nativists, Environmentalism, and the Hypocrisy of Hate}, p. 16.

said and done, the anti-immigrant movement’s response to climate change is not all that different from climate change deniers.” 46 Regardless of whether they deny or concede climate change, she stresses, right wing politics tends to unite in support of immigration restrictions and border securitization.

Similar to Hartmann, Rajani Bhatia explores right-wing environmentalist movements, and “the legacies of population control and eugenics manifested in green nativism.” 47 Bhatia argues, “messages put forth by the anti-immigrant environmentalists focus more strictly on producing alarm about population size, nonwhite fertility rates, and immigration numbers spilling out of control.” 48 According to Bhatia, “They single out population size as a primary cause of sprawl and congestion, leaving out any analysis of consumer culture based on strip malls and SUVs.” 49 There is extensive discourse surrounding the seeming obsession with fertility rates among women across race and ethnicity, with some, like Garrett Hardin and John Tanton, rejecting contraceptives as a tool of population reduction. For anti-immigrant environmentalists, according to Bhatia, “birth control can only marginally affect population growth rates. Therefore its main response to population and environmental problems is to prevent “the highly fertile” from entering United States borders.” 50

Syd Lindsley dissects impacts of the greening of hate on immigrant women from Mexico during the 1990s. Lindsley outlines general histories of nativist efforts in immigration policy during the mid- to late 20th century, including government-sanctioned deportation efforts during the 1950s under “Operation Wetback,” wherein Mexican immigrants and Mexican-Americans

46 Hartmann, “The Greening of Hate” in Greenwash (2010): p. 34
alike were deported. According to Lindsley, the anti-immigrant efforts in the 1990s, specifically in California, “took a different tack by targeting immigrants not as job seekers, but as resource depletors,” with specific attention on immigrant women as “reproductive agents.”

By the early 1990s, women made up the majority of undocumented Mexican immigrant populations as a result of a number of factors: the globalization of production, and the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, alongside increased participation of middle class women in the United States labor force. Due to this shift in demographic population to women-majority undocumented immigration, USA policy responded by attempting to control and criminalize Latina immigrant women’s bodies by two avenues: restricting spousal immigration, and limiting access to social services by both documented and undocumented immigrants.

These restrictions are considered by Lindsley to be attacks on immigrant women’s ability to reproduce and maintain their families, and form “the root of the recent assault on immigrants, especially through policies regulating immigrants’ use of public services.” Further, according to Lindsley, these attacks should be seen as an attempt to regulate and control immigrant women’s mothering. Policies regulating immigrant women’s reproductive agency are, partially, based on neo-nativist fears surrounding “anchor babies.” Defined by Tanton Network

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53 The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) was passed “to control ‘illegal’ immigration by authorizing an increase in border enforcement and by making it illegal for an employer to knowingly hire ‘an alien’ who does not have permission to work in this country”. Mostly men became legal citizens through this act, and as a result, many wives were able to immigrate (177).
organization, FAIRUS, in a seemingly neutral way, “anchor babies” refer to offspring “of an illegal immigrant or other non-citizen, who under current legal interpretation becomes a United States citizen at birth. These children may instantly qualify for welfare and other state and local programs.” However, anthropologist Alyshia Gálvez, unpacks the pejorative usage of the term to imply pregnant immigrants cross the border “only to ‘drop’ their babies in the emergency rooms of public hospitals, part of a grand plan to take advantage of free emergency medical care and to obtain United States citizenship for their children under the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution.”

Greening of Hate rhetoric holds gendered implications for immigrant women. Jessica Leann Urban further analyzes Hartmann’s argument against the greening of hate, seeing this phenomenon in the USA as an illustration of systemic privilege. Urban agrees with Hartmann’s argument, in that “‘the root cause of poverty, environmental degradation, and political instability lie in unjust and inequitable social and economic systems – not in women’s fertility’ and not in immigration across the USA-Mexico border.” Additionally, Urban makes similar critiques about the pre-occupation of nativists with immigrant women’s fertility that both Hartmann, Bhatia, Lindsley and Gálvez find concerning. According to Urban, “Based on stereotypes of high fertility, irresponsibility, laziness, and selfishness, Latinas are targeted for immigration and population control, as environmental security advocates assume that not only will immigrants themselves impinge upon existing services and resources, they will also ‘overpopulate’ once in the USA and further strain a limited resource base.” Urban also cites “program of deterrence” policies implemented under both Bill Clinton and George W. Bush’s

presidential administrations, which forced migrants to take more perilous routes into the United States, and led to over 4,000 fatalities between 1997-2007, from exposure, drowning, and dehydration.\textsuperscript{63} Urban argues that scapegoating immigrants for environmental degradation “not only absolves members of more structurally privileged groups in the USA from self-interrogation and personal responsibility, but also colludes with white supremacy, hetero-patriarchy, classism, and xenophobia, as well as with the consequences that result.”\textsuperscript{64}

Monica Aufrecht joins scholars like Hartmann in discrediting theories related to the \textit{greening of hate}, by comparing and analyzing critical perspectives on the \textit{greening of hate} to anti-immigrant propaganda by organizations of the Tanton Network, including FAIRUS and Californians for Population Stabilization (CAPS). Aufrecht uses domestic migration to Alaska as a case to test the claims made by right-wing environmentalists. Using migration from the “lower 48” United States to Alaska as a model, Aufrecht demonstrates that nativist environmentalism may be more convincing in terms of the increase of carbon emissions related to domestic migration of United States citizens.\textsuperscript{65} In simpler terms, Aufrecht demonstrates how nativist environmental claims do not hold traction in terms of immigrants entering the United States.

Looking outside of the USA, Joe Turner and Dan Bailey analyze the rhetoric of various European far-right political parties within the European parliament between May 2014 and September 2019. Similar to other critical perspectives of the \textit{greening of hate}, the authors critique what they call “ecobordering,” which represents “the consolidation and sanitization of a constellation of 19th and 20th century Malthusian, conservative, and ecofascist ideas, as well as Romantic-era notions of nature and belonging.”\textsuperscript{66} The authors determine two forms of anti-

\textsuperscript{65} Aufrecht, “Rethinking the Greening of Hate” (2012): pp. 61-63.
immigrant rhetoric being propagated by European far-right parties between the years of their data. First, the notion of migration as environmental plunder, which highlights the environmental impacts of migration from the Global South. Within this form of rhetoric, which draws directly from neo-Malthusian thought, Global South migration depletes scarce natural resources and exacerbates environmental degradation within Europe. The second form of rhetoric propagated by these groups is the notion of migrants as environmental vandals, which actively disparages the character of migrants as “uncivilized” or as threats to the local environment due to these perceived traits. Within this form of rhetoric, migrants are depicted as inherently incapable or unwilling to protect the “natural world,” and white national citizens are, in contrast, cast as inherently responsible stewards of nature. According to the authors, the concepts of belonging and investment are used to conflate nativism with environmental protection; “an inherent connection between the land and the heritage of belonging, ownership, and bloodline.”

To wrap up this section, critical scholars draw connections between contemporary and historical relationships and impacts of nativism and white supremacy within the environmental movement. These histories have demonstrated, while complex, the overt targeting of both immigrant and Indigenous communities. Immigrant and Indigenous women are targeted as a means of controlling their abilities to hold familial ties, and raise children safely and according to their respective, diverse cultural traditions. A closer examination and scholarly discourse on the relationship between the greening of hate and the dimensions of settler colonialism is also necessary to understand the tactics of individuals and organizations that perpetuate this rhetoric.

68 Turner and Bailey, “Ecobordering” (2021): p. 120.
IV. Anti-Colonial Perspectives- Settler Colonialism and the Greening of Hate

In this section I turn to the work of scholars whose decolonial commitments elaborate scholarship on the greening of hate. Giovanna Di Chiro defines environmental education as a social practice that aims to bring about the education for an environmentally aware and active citizenry. Di Chiro emphasizes that environmental education “must at once play a role in combating ever-increasing environmental problems, and also be involved in self critique with regard to its role in sustaining those social structures and relations that cause or support environmental problems.” This is important to avoid the trap of nativist environmentalism. While the environmental movement has not, theoretically, been under threat of a fascist takeover, attempting to address environmental racism, and white supremacy within the environmental movement overall, is still a growing challenge that EJ activists face. I suggest that engaging in “self-critique,” as Di Chiro proposes, would require greater attention to settler colonialism, which is just as intrinsic to nativist thought as their anti-immigrant environmentalism.

Stephen Nathan Haymes describes eurocentrist environmental ethics as “green imperialism.” More specifically, Haymes states the “so-called ‘global environmental ethics’” has resulted in a “eurocentric view of the contemporary ecological crisis,” grounding it in the “Western Code.” According to Haymes, the Western code is “sustained by and anchored in the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality. It thus implicitly subscribes to the idea that there is one sustainable system of knowledge, and, by extension, of landscape and land ethic.” This Western code propagates forms of modern settler colonialism.

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In addition, Liddell and Kington, and Arvin (et al) note that settler colonialism should be viewed as an ongoing process, rather than a historical event. By taking this approach, Liddell and Kington can “more clearly see that today’s environmental injustices are not isolated instances but part of the ongoing settler colonial project. Settler colonialism is distinct from colonialism in several important ways which impact environmental injustices experienced by Indigenous groups in the United States.” According to Liddell and Kington, the goal in “classic colonialism” is extraction of the land to send back resources to a different home, often viewing native people as cheap labor to exploit, while the “settler colonialist” objective is to gain control of and settle the land. Further, this severed relationship with the land has important implications for the health and well-being of Indigenous populations, and works to force assimilation, potentially continuing the settler colonialist process of elimination of the native population.

By using the framing of settler colonialism as a structure and an ongoing process, environmental injustices (and the corresponding reproductive injustices) experienced by Indigenous populations today are not isolated events. Rather they stem from the onset of settler colonialism to its present day manifestations. “In order to do this,” Liddell and Kington describe, “settlers first work to eliminate the native people, through methods such as genocide, forced removal and annexation, and assimilation. In the United States, a combination of all three of these have occurred among the Indigenous population at various points throughout history.”

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76 Liddell and Kington, “Something was Attacking Them and Their Reproductive Organs”, p. 2.
77 Liddell and Kington, “Something was Attacking Them and Their Reproductive Organs”, p. 2.
78 Liddell and Kington, ““Something Was Attacking Them and Their Reproductive Organs”, p. 2.
79 Liddell and Kington, ““Something Was Attacking Them and Their Reproductive Organs”, p. 2.
It is also important to include forced sterilizations as part of genocide, or as a method of its own.

In the present these overt forms of violence are joined by more implicit disappearing acts.

For example, Native scholar Dian Million argues that Indigenous peoples of the North American continent are not represented in maps of large cities (even when they are greatly present), “because they are associated with another narrative, that of “frontiers” and of a past rather than a future.” Million adds that “Indigenous peoples, characterized as the primitive past, anchor the narratives of progress that built these megacities on their lands. Cities that disappear their difference within the hierarchies that keep capitalist relations in place. Indigenous peoples are very present in these cities and the environments that they are also a part of.” The displacement of indigenous communities through histories of settler colonialism thus extends into the present via such disappearing acts. By recognizing the ways in which nativism targets both immigrant and Indigenous communities alike, the rhetoric of the “greening of hate” includes not only a “keep them at home” policy, but also as I aim to show, an implicit “disappearing” of First Nations not unlike this example given by Million.

Through Liddell and Kington’s framing of settler colonialism as an ongoing process, Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck, and Angie Morrill and other Native American Studies scholars like Andrea Smith critique aspects of settler colonialism by centering the settler nation-state and

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80 Million, “’We Are The Land, And The Land Is Us’, p. 22.
81 Million, “’We Are The Land, And The Land Is Us’, p. 22.
83 It is important to note that Andrea Smith’s Cherokee ancestry has been questioned for some time by Cherokee leaders, despite her building a strong reputation (in part) because of her claimed Native feminist standpoint. While considering this, her academic works in regard to centering the experiences and concerns of indigenous women in the United States continue to be foundational literature of work within academic settings, including Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) courses, and can still be beneficial in research settings. This footnote is used as a means of reflexivity within my own work. Moreso, it would be hypocritical within this project to discuss ecofascists appropriating indigenous culture without recognizing when notable feminist scholars have been accused of similar conduct. More information can be found within the New York Times article, entitled The Native Scholar Who Wasn’t by Sarah Viren, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/25/magazine/cherokee-native-american-andrea-smith.html
centering instead the experiences and voices of Indigenous women. The authors interpret ongoing cultural appropriation of native identities as another form of settler colonialism. According to Arvin and others, “The non-Indigenous desire to “play native” may seem like a passing trend, but it is actually a fundamental condition of life within settler colonialism, as settlers continuously seek to capitalize on what they understand as their own country’s native resources, which include indigenous cultures and peoples themselves.”

Andrea Smith additionally interprets cultural appropriation as a form of spiritual violence.

Rayna Green coins the concept of “playing Indian” (henceforth “playing native”) while analyzing American and European forms of indigenous cultural appropriation. Green explores many instances throughout European and American popular culture that turns indigenous peoples into caricatures, including Wild West shows, and mascots for national sports teams, like the (formerly named) Washington “Redskins” American football team, for Washington, D.C..

Lisa Aldred also explores the concept of commercialized cultural appropriation, and consuming Native American spirituality. Aldred analyzes “new age” commercialization of Native American spirituality through aesthetics, including non-indigenous folks “playing native” through appropriating indigenous rituals and practices, including “sweat” ceremonies and sun dances. According to Aldred, “the commercialization of Native American spirituality in both books and products also suggests that consumers ‘own’ Native American spirituality in some sense.” The appropriation of indigeneity, or engaging in “playing native” as per Reyna Green, is clear in

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right-wing environmentalist utilization of pre-Christian, European symbolism and rhetoric. When nativists and ecofascists appropriate aesthetics of European polytheisms, similar to how high ranking Nazi officials used nature mysticism to bolster support, when nativists and ecofascists use rhetoric about European (or American) identitarianism to promote xenophobic rhetoric, they are attempting to pass off some sort of notion of “belongingness” between the natural landscape and their own heritage or bloodline, as noted by Turner and Bailey. Nativist environmentalists thus “play native” in these two senses discussed above. They disappear actual indigenous groups both by asserting an exceptional claim of belonging to the land and by cultural and symbolic appropriations.

As a way to resist the nativist influence over environmentalisms, my scholarly commitments draw on the ERJ framework and vision elaborated by scholar and Mohawk descendent, Elizabeth Hoover. ERJ brings together the concept of reproductive justice and environmental justice, and seeks to ensure that a community’s reproductive capabilities are not inhibited by environmental contamination. According to Hoover, ERJ “includes considering the impact of environmental contamination on the reproduction of humans, as well as the reproduction of knowledge and culturally informed tribal citizens.” Because of the unique history and political relationships between native communities and the settler government, Native American Studies scholars have argued that achieving environmental justice for tribes necessitates going beyond “equal protection.”

91 Hoover, “Environmental Reproductive Justice”, p.10.
Giovanna Di Chiro notes that if we begin to view “environment” as a social construction, then we also begin to view the notion of an “environmental problem” very differently.\(^9^3\) Indigenous communities are often left out in environmental discourses, despite the common knowledge that environmental impacts affecting indigenous communities will eventually affect everyone else.\(^9^4\) This is intentional and an act of settler colonialism against Indigenous communities, particularly in the United States.\(^9^5\) These environmental impacts have affected many communities' abilities to give birth safely, breastfeed their children, and pass down cultural knowledge (a process called “social reproduction” by Di Chiro or “reproduction of cultural knowledge/cultural reproduction” by Elizabeth Hoover).\(^9^6\)

*Environmental Reproductive Justice: Intersections in an American Indian Community Impacted by Environmental Contamination*, Elizabeth Hoover cites Di Chiro’s definition of social reproduction as,

‘The intersecting complex of political-economic, sociocultural, and material-environmental processes required to maintain everyday life and to sustain human cultures and communities on a daily basis and intergenerationally’. This encompasses conditions that both enable and disable biological reproduction as well as social practices, and relations of power, that are connected to socialization and the fulfillment of human needs.\(^9^7\)

Hoover defines reproduction of cultural knowledge as a concern of Indigenous peoples in addition to concerns about the biological reproduction of community members from

\(^{93}\) Di Chiro, “Applying a Feminist Critique to Environmental Education,” p. 2


\(^{95}\) Liddell and Kington, “Something Was Attacking Them And Their Reproductive Organs,” p. 2.


\(^{97}\) Hoover, “Environmental Reproductive Justice,” p. 11.
environmental contamination. Hoover defines cultural reproduction as the passing down of
cultural knowledge (within many tribal communities, like the Akwesasne) between generations,
or “reproducing culturally informed citizens.”\textsuperscript{98}

Indigenous American communities face disproportionate health burdens and
environmental health risks compared with the average North American population.\textsuperscript{99} According
to Hoover, Cook, Plain, Sanchez, Waghiiyi, Miller, Default, Sislin, and Carpenter, these health
impacts are issues of both environmental and reproductive justice.\textsuperscript{100} Forms of action to address
intersections of EJ and RJ within these communities include addressing Indigenous communities
lowered rates of breastfeeding from PCB exposure (particularly Mohawk nation at Akwesasne),
higher infant mortality rates among the Oglala Lakota people, reproductive cancers, birth
defects, infertility, and miscarriages.\textsuperscript{101} According to Hoover, most attempts to address these
issues, however, merely encourage communities impacted by environmental contamination to
avoid the source of contamination such as water and fish.\textsuperscript{102} Letting the responsible industries off
the hook from clean up, Hoover, Di Chiro, and Smith point out, impedes the intergenerational
passing of cultural knowledge, or the reproduction of cultures in which these resources play an
integral part. Thus, cultural reproduction (in addition to biological and social reproduction) is a
central concern to ERJ.\textsuperscript{103}

Through drawing on ERJ and feminist critiques of settler colonialism, I aim to critique

\textsuperscript{98} Hoover, “Environmental Reproductive Justice,” p. 3.
\textsuperscript{100} Hoover et al., “Indigenous Peoples of North America,” p. 1645.
\textsuperscript{101} Hoover, “Environment Reproductive Justice,” pp. 1-3.
\textsuperscript{103} Hoover, “Environmental Reproductive Justice,” p. 11, 18, 19, and Hoover et al., “Indigenous Peoples
ecofascist and nativist appropriations of Indigeneity. I will contribute to a growing body of literature concerning feminist critiques of right-wing movements, particularly critiques surrounding population, immigration, and preservation of culture. By highlighting how Indigenous peoples are often left out of this constructed dichotomy of citizen versus immigrant, I aim to demonstrate how right-wing environmentalists “play native” at the expense of immigrants and Indigenous communities alike. Finally, I postulate the continued co-option of Nordic and other ancient, pre-Christian, European symbols as a means of “playing Native,” within propaganda-laden rhetoric spread by ecofascist terrorists, and alt-right demonstrators at the 2017 Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, and the January 6, 2021 Capitol insurrection in Washington, D.C. While scapegoating immigrants for environmental degradation, ecofascist nativism also appropriates Indigeneity, further erasing the existence and continued injustices against Indigenous communities, particularly environmental impacts of settler colonialism.

Methods

Looking at manifestos from ecofascist mass shooters, articles from Tanton Network organizations, as well as political rhetoric and sociopolitical mobilizations, this project analyzes the ways that greening of hate and broader white supremacist conspiracy theories are mobilized. It explores the ways in which various actors engage in appropriating Indigeneity, or “playing native,” at the expense of immigrants and examines if actual Indigenous communities are referenced in the process.

Donald Trump and his presidential administration are not the center of this project. However, the years of his administration, as well as the rhetoric that influenced socio-political conditions within the United States and beyond, are used as a means of chronologically tracking
extremist mobilizations. Trump is a divisive figure within larger right-wing politics, but has contributed to the emboldenment and empowerment of individuals and organizations within the extreme right, that either explicitly adhere to ecofascism, or use ecofascist propaganda/rhetoric to garner more recruitment among a broader, conservative population. Betsy Hartmann was correct in her warning to avoid “Trump exceptionalism,” or the notion that he is the worst and most dangerous President ever.\textsuperscript{104} However, the role of Trump’s influence within larger right-wing mobilizations cannot be understated, if not his parroting of actual ecofascist and white supremacist discourse.

In his response to Charlottesville’s “Unite the Right Rally” in 2017, Trump referred to Alt-right members as “very fine people”, and further denounced “hatred, bigotry, and violence on many sides, on many sides.”\textsuperscript{105} This reaction and “condemnation” of alt-right militiamen and neo-Nazis only increased tensions within the country. Executive response to the violence in Charlottesville pushed alt-right ideologies into mainstream politics throughout the duration of the Trump presidency.\textsuperscript{106}

Manifestos from ecofascist mass shooters, Brenton Tarrant and Patrick Crusius inform a bulk of my analysis. Other sets of data emphasize the ways in which different organizations and actors influence each other. Data stemming from the Tanton Network, organizations founded and/or funded by John Tanton, and affiliated with various extremists, include online articles from the Social Contract Press (SCP). Whereas I could easily access articles from the Tanton Network and the Tarrant manifesto through Google searches online, Crusius’ manifesto was more difficult

\textsuperscript{104} Hartmann, \textit{The America Syndrome} (2017): p. 16.
\textsuperscript{106} Frontline PBS, “American Insurrection (full documentary) | FRONTLINE,” FRONTLINE PBS, 13 April 2021, video, 0:00-1:23:12, \url{https://youtu.be/jcGi4maijw8}.
to find. After writing the proposal for this project, I managed to find Crusius’ manifesto after searching Google, by being more specific in search terms, and finding a copy of the original manifesto from a website that provided a content warning above the document. Additionally, online news articles from *The Washington Post* and *Mother Jones* are used as supplementary primary sources, as these articles include journalist commentary during and immediately after these events. The utilization of journalist commentary is important as their commentary includes interviews with participants at mobilizations, and academic experts, further contextualizing symbols and rhetoric deployed at these events.

The *New York Times* and PBS provide extensive video documentation from alt-right mobilizations during the Trump presidency. Additionally, on-the-ground footage captured by VICE News from Charlottesville, as well as news correspondent commentary from both Charlottesville and the 2021 Capitol insurrection, show the language used by protestors demonstrating clear white supremacist rhetoric, as well as symbols and images utilized by right-wing organizations to demonstrate a uniformed, collective presence. In other words, the symbols and language deployed during these mobilizations are intentional and used as a means of showing collective strength. The videos of sociopolitical movements were accessed via YouTube, wherein I found PBS Frontline videos suggested under the VICE News, and *The New York Times* videos.

Many symbols depicted within these mobilizations are designated as hate symbols by organizations researching extremism, like the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). In analyzing symbols, language, and images used in these larger mobilizations, critical research organizations like the ADL and SPLC contribute to primary data selection, as a means of connecting symbols to organizations, and tracing histories of symbols
within alt-right movements. Both the ADL and SPLC identify hate symbols and organizations within right-wing mobilizations like Charlottesville, but also provide information of symbols also seen at the Capitol insurrection during January 6, 2021. Data from these organizations were accessed through searching their websites, and manually scrolling through their databases to find information related to these symbols and corresponding images.

The process of analyzing these various types of data involved identifying and coding themes, including various subthemes. These include immigration with subthemes on land invasion, bodily invasion, and the environment. Other themes across data include: war/militarization, religion, and familiar political actors, like Donald Trump, or references of mass shooters and extremists between manifestos. Additionally, after analyzing the Tarrant manifesto again, I added the theme of Asatru/Germanic polytheism. After analyzing themes and coordinating similarities based on color codes, I analyzed video footage from The New York Times, VICE News, and PBS Frontline. From these videos and visual investigations, I recorded timestamps of potential hate symbols, which I corroborated by databases, reports, and articles from the ADL and SPLC. Main themes from the footage include 1) immigration (also prominent within textual data), 2) theories of a “great replacement,” and 3) Asatru, and European polytheisms.

Findings

Brenton Tarrant began his manifesto stating, “It’s the birth rates, it’s the birth rates, it’s the birth rates. If there is one thing I want you to remember from these writings, it’s that birth rates must change. Even if we were to deport all non-Europeans from our lands tomorrow, the
European people would still be spiraling into decay and eventual death.”

Similarly, Patrick Crusius refers to Latino immigrants as “invaders who also have close to the highest birth rate of all ethnicities in America.” Tarrant responded to the self-prompted question of why he targeted Muslims, stating “they were an obvious, visible, and large group of invaders from a culture with higher fertility rates, higher social trust, and strong, robust traditions that seek to occupy my people’s land and ethnically replace my own people.” Both Tarrant and Crusius claim greening of hate and “great replacement theory” rhetoric within their respective ideologies.

Both Tarrant and Crusius “play native” in three main ways or moves. First, they claim a native white identity under threat, clearly twisting and perverting discourses of invasion in relation to immigration. By comparing the genocide of indigenous groups with the supposed “great replacement” of white, European populations, they appropriate a “colonized” victim identity. Second, they construe white, European American women as under threat of rape by “invading forces.” Although the above two nativist claims overtly target immigrants, they covertly perform the ultimate settler colonialist move, which is to take the place/space/land of indigenous peoples. The third way, and varying across data, is the utilization of ancient European, pagan symbols as a means of expressing a “native European” aesthetic, playing into European identitarian movements that are on the rise within the alt-right. There are plenty of instances where these tactics overlap, especially regarding actors like Brenton Tarrant, or some of the alt-right demonstrators in Charlottesville.

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Move 1: “Playing Native” by Claiming a Native White Identity Under Threat of “Invasion” by Immigration

Elle Reeve of VICE News stated during the Charlottesville “Unite the Right Rally” that alt-right protesters were “supposedly here to protest the removal of a statue of Robert E. Lee,” but they were really there to show that “they’re more than an internet meme. That they’re a big, real presence that can organize in the physical space.”111 The large-scale attention Charlottesville garnered within the general public later inspired ecofascist terror attacks within mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, and at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas.112 Patrick Crusius, the El Paso Walmart shooter, who was inspired by Brenton Tarrant’s terror attack in Christchurch months prior, defended his actions in his manifesto by alleging a “cultural and ethnic replacement” brought on by an immigrant “invasion” in Texas.113

Crusius wrote at the beginning of his manifesto, “This attack is a response to the Hispanic invasion of Texas. They are the instigators, not me. I am simply defending my country from cultural and ethnic replacement brought on by an invasion.”114 Further, Crusius wrote, “my motives for this attack are not at all personal. In fact, the Hispanic community was not my target before I read ‘The Great Replacement.'”115 It is important to note that Tarrant’s manifesto, “The Great Replacement” is named after the original work from which the conspiracy theory derives. It is also interesting to note that “The Inconvenient Truth,” the title of Patrick Crusius’ manifesto, has a very similar title to the Al Gore film An Inconvenient Truth, which is about

climate change.\textsuperscript{116} Though not explicitly stated by Crusius in his manifesto, the connection in
titles is more than a coincidence. Further defending his viewpoint, Crusius alleged,

“Some people will think this statement is hypocritical because of the nearly complete
ethnic and cultural destruction brought on to Native Americans by our European
ancestors. But this just reinforces my point. The natives didn’t take the invasion of
Europeans seriously, and now what’s left is just a shadow of what was.”\textsuperscript{117}

Crusius justified his actions by claiming a victim identity under the perceived threat of
“colonization” through immigration. Crusius claimed that the United States was “full of
hypocrites who will blast my actions as the sole result of racism and hatred of other countries,
despite all the extensive evidence of all the problems these invaders cause and will cause.”\textsuperscript{118}

Further, Crusius railed against “hypocrites” who support “imperialistic wars that have caused the
loss of tens of thousands of American lives and untold numbers of civilian lives.”\textsuperscript{119} According
to Crusius, “The argument that mass murder is okay when it’s state sanctioned is absurd. Our
government has killed a whole lot more people for a whole lot less.”\textsuperscript{120} Crusius intentionally
distanced himself from the “imperialist hypocrisy” of the United States, while also constructing a
more justified reason for violence, in order to defend white “native” identity.

Tarrant took on a similar guise of victimization, to fit a white supremacist, white
genocide narrative. Tarrant wrote that he represents the “millions of European and
ethnonationalist peoples that wish to live in peace amongst their own people, living in their own

\textsuperscript{116} Gore’s original film about climate change is mentioned by Hartmann within her work, \textit{The America Syndrome}, in relation to larger neo-Malthusian rhetoric within the American environmental movement (210-211).
lands, practicing their own traditions, and deciding the future of their own kind.”

There is clear sentiments from these individuals feeling like “victims” of some form of “colonization” or invasion, as a means of perpetuating the greening of hate, and xenophobic propaganda. Individuals like Tarrant and Crusius have constructed their own identities as the “true victims” of some form of invasion by a foreign influence, and believe they should not be deemed guilty for murder based on these facades.

All data. This rhetoric was highly prevalent within larger, right-wing mobilizations within the USA during the Donald Trump presidency, particularly at the “unite the right rally” in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017, and at the January 6, 2021 Insurrection of the United States Capitol. According to VICE News, the three target groups for great replacement conspiracy theorists are Latinos, Muslims, and Jews. In the United States, there is a distinct focus on scapegoating Latino immigrants, particularly comparing immigrants to invaders. But when looking at Trump’s 2015 announcement speech, clearly there are other groups of migrants who are at risk of being scapegoated under this connection between the “greening of hate” and “great replacement” conspiracy theory. More specifically, migrants from the Middle East and “developing nations” mentioned by John Tanton in his 1975 essay are also impacted by these negative connotations.

Looking outside of the United States, Brenton Tarrant considers “Roma, African, Indian, Turkish, Semitic, or other” as invaders, and further proclaims “remove the invaders, retake

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Antisemitic rhetoric and hate-based crimes against Jewish people are also prominent, specifically demonstrated by the clear antisemitic language used at the “Unite the Right Rally” in Charlottesville. It is worth noting that this rhetoric is broad and can be placed onto any marginalized group or “minority,” as mentioned by VICE News. The data demonstrates the ways in which greening of hate rhetoric plays into larger, “great replacement” and “white genocide” conspiracy theories.

Tarrant wrote in his manifesto that if he survives, he will go to trial and plead not guilty. Tarrant wrote, “The attack was a partisan action against an occupying force, and I am a lawful, uniformed combatant.” Tarrant viewed Australia as a colony of Europe; “simply an offshoot of the European people,” or “a finger on the hand of the body of Europe.” Further, Tarrant wrote, “the origin of my language is European, my culture is European, my political beliefs are European, my philosophical beliefs are European, my identity is European, and most importantly, my blood is European.” Ecofascists like Tarrant equate race and ethnic belonging to nature, or “European blood” to “European lands,” which demonstrates clear influence of the “blood and soil mystique.”

Tarrant did not once mention or acknowledge the presence of Indigenous tribes and people in Australia or New Zealand. This is an example of the settler colonialist notion that nothing was there prior to European colonization and these people just do not exist. During the tiki torch march on the campus of the University of Virginia during the 2017 “unite the right

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130 Biehl and Staudenmaier, “Ecofascism”, pp. 6-8.
131 Million, “We Are The Land, And The Land Is Us”, p. 22.
rally,” chants from the crowd included, “You will not replace us,” “Jews will not replace us,” and “Blood and soil.”\textsuperscript{132} Clearly, these demonstrators used phrases with links to Nazi Germany, as displayed through the use of the phrase “blood and soil.”\textsuperscript{133} These demonstrators also actively acknowledged their beliefs in “great replacement” conspiracy theory, which alleges that Jewish people and communists, through their support of immigration, are masterminding a dilution of white European populations. Many of these actors, similarly obsess over the threat of rape of white, Euro-American women by foreign “invaders,” a classic white nationalist claim, which reveals how integral sexism is to the nativist project.

**Move 2: “Playing Native” by Claiming a Native White Identity Under Threat via Rape and Interracial Reproduction**

Ecofascists and neo-nativists (aligned with the overall system of white supremacy) view immigrant men of color inherently as rapists who threaten the preservation of whiteness by sexually assaulting or reproducing with white women. While Tarrant railed against immigrants as rapists in his manifesto, Crusius writes of immigrants and their non-immigrant partners as “race mixers.” Here, Tarrant incorporates the rape threat in a discussion that imagines “NGOs” as a force to be vilified, a vehicle behind the “great replacement:”

“Beholden to no one, and hiding their true intent behind a faux-religious facade, these NGO groups ferry the invaders to European shores, abroad their own vessels, directly shipping this vast army straight into European nations to plunder, rape, and ethnically displace the native European people.”\textsuperscript{134}


\textsuperscript{133} Biehl and Staudenmaier, “Ecofascism”, p. 14.

Crusius, relatedly, was preoccupied with interracial reproduction: “Second and third generation Hispanics form interracial unions at much higher rates than average. Yet another reason to send them back.”\textsuperscript{135} Further, Crusius claimed, “cultural and racial diversity is largely temporary. Cultural diversity diminishes as stronger and/or more appealing cultures overtake weaker and/or undesirable ones. Racial diversity will disappear as missing or genocide will take place.”\textsuperscript{136} While Crusius acknowledged the reality of consensual, interracial marriage and family raising (with racist arrogance), Tarrant actively avoided this discourse within his manifesto. Tarrant wrote, “Children of invaders do not stay children. They become adults and reproduce, creating more invaders to replace your people.”\textsuperscript{137} Additionally, Tarrant wrote “any invader you kill, of any age, is one less enemy your children will have to face.”\textsuperscript{138} While constructing white identity as a colonized victim under threat, Tarrant also, quite literally, called for the deaths of perceived immigrant “invaders,” including children, in his manifesto.

Tarrant took a much more extreme discourse in relation to interracial sexual interactions, intentionally and specifically citing cases of sexual abuse rings, that have occurred over differing, sometimes prolonged periods of time before prosecution. Using names as shorthand for rape cases well known among right-wing extremists, Tarrant wrote, “many of you may already know about the rape of British women by the invading forces. Rotherham of course being the most well-known case. But what few know is that Rotherham is just one of an ongoing trend of rape and molestation perpetuated by this non-white scum.”\textsuperscript{139} Tarrant’s essay on the “rape of European women” consisted of Wikipedia page links to different sexual abuse scandals within

the United Kingdom, involving mostly immigrant men, including: Rotherham, Aylesbury, Banbury, Bristol, Derby, Halifax, Huddersfield, Keyleigh, New Castle, Rochdale, Oxford, Peterborough, and Telford. Tarrant also cited cases in Australia, Finland, Germany. Tarrant reflected on these cases, “the true number of these events perpetuated across the western world is unknown, and certainly under reported, as both the state, the media, and the judicial system work in unison to hide these atrocities in the fear that knowledge of these events would enrage the native people of the West, and damage the perception of our new ‘multicultural utopia.’” A Social Contract Press article also references sexual assault cases involving users of rideshare services, which , “have a history of hiring illegal aliens, along with many ‘migrants’ from countries whose culture views women and children as nothing more than property.” The Social Contract Press article cites cases in the USA involving immigrants from Ethiopia, Uganda, Guatemala, alongside other migrants simply labeled as “African.”

Tarrant concluded his manifesto with a threat: “finally I’d like to send a message to the perpetrators of these attacks, and their families. You will hang. If you are in prison, we will reach you there. If you try to hide these rapist scum, we will kill you as well. For the disgrace you have heaped upon the European people and the distress you have caused to European women, you will die.” Chillingly, Tarrant calls other nativists to action: “kill the rapists, hang their families.”

Ecofascist rhetoric clearly focuses on sexual violence but also sex and pro-creation overall in

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142 It is important to emphasize the fusion of seemingly anti-colonial and radical feminist rhetoric being taken up here, though obviously used with direct intent to justify xenophobic, racist ideology.
ways that construct “foreign invaders” as inherent criminal rapists who prey on white (women’s) bodies in addition to white land.

**Move 3: “Playing Native” through the Appropriation of Symbolism to Convey White Cultural Heritage/Ancestry**

It is very clear that Tarrant views himself as a “native” European person who must defend “his lands” from invasion, which demonstrates a form of appropriating Indigeneity, or what Reyna Green calls “playing native.” Invocations of ancestors are typical among indigenous tribes who seek to draw connections to a past from which they have been violently uprooted. By making references to (white) ancestors, Tarrant seeks to conjure a sense of displacement: “your ancestors did not sweat blood and die in the name of a multicultural egalitarian nation. Venerate the ancestors, but work for the children.”\(^{147}\) Part of Tarrant’s intentions included, “to show the effect of direct action, lighting a path forward for those that wish to follow. A path for those to follow that wish to free their ancestors lands from the invaders grasp and to be a beacon for those that wish to create a lasting culture.”\(^{148}\) There are clear appropriations and fusions of European polytheist imagery and symbols in alt-right movements intended to invoke a white cultural heritage. These images are deployed in protest, specifically in Charlottesville and the January 6\(^{th}\) United States Capitol Insurrection, as well as within the Christchurch manifesto.

While European polytheist or pagan appropriation is there, this is used for a larger, “European pride” aesthetic. Tarrant responded to the self-prompted question of whether he is Christian, claiming, “that is complicated. When I know, I will tell you.”\(^{149}\) Tarrant ended his manifesto by saying, “Goodbye, god bless you all, and I will see you in Valhalla, Europa

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Valhalla is the name of an afterlife specific to Nordic pagan traditions, particularly designated for fallen soldiers during battle. Extremists like Tarrant play into neo-Volkisch rhetoric within their ecofascist ideology, but implicitly calling Tarrant a practitioner of Asatru or a polytheist is not accurate, as he actively uses distinct crusades-era, Christian rhetoric about Muslims. The reference to Valhalla, and questions surrounding Christianity is not the only aspect of “playing native.” Small references to Norse and Germanic terms and symbols are present throughout the manifesto, particularly sonnenrads.

As per figure 1a, Tarrant’s image collage at the end of his manifesto contains images with conflations of ethnic belonging to the natural landscape replete with sonnenrads. The sonnenrad, or schwarse sonne (“black sun” in German), is a symbol based on ancient “sun wheel” artifacts, made and used by Norse and Germanic tribes to “represent their pagan beliefs.” This symbol is synonymous with “myriad far-right groups who traffic in neo-Nazi or neo-volkisch ideologies.” According to the SPLC, the symbol also held some form of significance within the “occult practices of the SS.” The sonnenrad, according to the ADL, “is one of a number of ancient European symbols appropriated by the Nazis in their attempt to invent an idealized "Aryan/Norse" heritage. The sonnenrad appears in the traditional symbology of many countries and cultures, including Old Norse and Celtic cultures.”

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151 Tarrant refers to Muslims as “Saracens” in a prompt “to Christians”, wherein he asks “what would Pope Urban II do?” (35).
155 HateWatch Staff, “Flags and Other Symbols Used by Far-Right Groups in Charlottesville” SPLC, 2017.
156 HateWatch Staff, “Flags and Other Symbols Used by Far-Right Groups in Charlottesville” SPLC, 2017.
157 ADL, “Sonnenrad” ADL Hate Symbol Database.
sonnenrads are prevalent within the Tarrant manifesto, and in the presence of alt-right
demonstrators in Charlottesville.

Looking deeper at on-the-ground footage captured by VICE News and PBS of
Charlottesville’s “Unite the Right rally,” numerous symbols co-opted by fascist movements that
hold some pagan, ancient European origins can be seen, ranging in prominence within the mob
of torches, business casual attire, and chants. The 2017 Charlottesville demonstrations by alt-
right militiamen and neo-Nazis displayed many symbols of association or allyship within alt-
right organizations and networks. Notably, the amount of fused imagery of confederate, USA,
and nazi symbols on flags was very prominent within footage of the mobilization.\textsuperscript{158} There were
images and video captured of red and white striped flags with sonnenrads as one example;
Vanguard America-Texas uses this flag with a blue wheel, and a star in the middle of the
sonnenrad’s wheel, representing the Texas state flag.\textsuperscript{159} Figure 1b depicts this described flag,
utilized by sects of Vanguard America-Texas, as cited by the SPLC.\textsuperscript{160} Another demonstrator in
Charlottesville was captured with a red shield and sonnenrad designed on front, as per Figure 1c,
further demonstrating the wide utilization of the sonnenrad by white supremacist extremists and
ecofascists alike.\textsuperscript{161}

A variety of symbols connected back to one organization took center stage within the on-
the-ground footage, including two crossed axes within a circle, and an eagle carrying an axe. All
of these images are usually white symbols on a black background, or vice versa. All of these

\textsuperscript{158} FRONTLINE PBS, “Documenting Hate: Charlottesville (Full Film) | FRONTLINE,” FRONTLINE PBS, video, 2:00-2:18.
\textsuperscript{159} HateWatch Staff, “Flags and Other Symbols Used by Far-Right Groups in Charlottesville” SPLC, 2017.
\textsuperscript{160} FRONTLINE PBS, “Documenting Hate: Charlottesville (Full Film) | FRONTLINE,” FRONTLINE PBS, video, 2:50, 3:07-3:10
\textsuperscript{161} FRONTLINE PBS, “Documenting Hate: Charlottesville (Full Film) | FRONTLINE,” FRONTLINE PBS, video, 8:02-8:08
images, with the common and consistent use of the symbolic *fasces*,\(^{162}\) are used by Vanguard America.\(^{163}\) Various white supremacist groups, including Vanguard America, which is designated by the ADL as a hate group, has used the *fasces* as part of their group logos at various times.\(^{164}\) As seen in on the ground footage from Charlottesville, members of Vanguard America were recorded wearing white polo shirts and black baseball caps with a white eagle grasping a *fasces*, as well as shields with *fasces*-related images printed or spray painted on.\(^{165}\) **Figures 2a and 2b** show images of Vanguard America members, adorned with *fasces*-related symbols.\(^{166}\) Additionally, these images demonstrate the organized presence groups like Vanguard America create at large alt-right mobilizations.

The *fasces* was adopted by Benito Mussolini for his Italian fascist movement, wherein he even coined the term “fascism” after the image.\(^{167}\) According to the ADL, the symbol became synonymous with fascism as a movement in Italy and globally.\(^{168}\) The image of the eagle carrying a *fasces* originates from the Italian Social Republic (1943-1945) flag, which combined the eagle carrying a fasces with the traditional flag of the Kingdom of Italy.\(^{169}\) According to the ADL, this symbol dates back to ancient Rome, whose leaders used it as a symbol of authority

\(^{162}\) A *fasces* is a bound bundle of sticks or rods into which an axe is inserted or attached, according to the ADL’s hate symbol webpage (cited below).


\(^{167}\) ADL, “Fasces | Anti-Defamation League”, *ADL Hate Symbols Database*.

\(^{168}\) ADL, “Fasces | Anti-Defamation League”, *ADL Hate Symbols Database*.

\(^{169}\) ADL, “Fasces | Anti-Defamation League”, *ADL Hate Symbols Database*. 
and power.\textsuperscript{170} Further, this image long survived the Roman Republic and Empire, becoming an image of governmental authority, so much that the United States has used this image within their own institutional symbolism.\textsuperscript{171}

The use of the \textit{fasces} as a symbolic representation is not just utilized by organizations, or groups of people who are clearly at a demonstration as a group, but also perceived lone-wolves of the mob, following along as the camera catches glimpses of them. One of these individuals held a makeshift shield that had a white background, with various designs and images on it, including red and white stripes, a fasces, as well as a number of \textit{elder futhark} runic symbols (shown in Figure 3).\textsuperscript{172} Similarly to other ancient symbols and images, the \textit{elder futhark} runes, which originate from a pre-Roman alphabet system, were once widely utilized across Europe.\textsuperscript{173} Nazis in Germany adopted various runes and symbols, as part of their attempt to reconstruct a mythic “Aryan” past.\textsuperscript{174} Runic symbols like the \textit{othala} rune, the \textit{sun rune} (also known as SS bolts\textsuperscript{175}), and the \textit{elk} or \textit{life rune} have historically been appropriated by Nazi Germany, and utilized by white supremacists in large mobilizations like Charlottesville.\textsuperscript{176} It is commonly seen in the modern day in forms of tattoos, on flags or banners, and as part of group logos.\textsuperscript{177}

\textsuperscript{170} HateWatch Staff, “Flags and Other Symbols Used by Far-Right Groups in Charlottesville” SPLC, 2017, and ADL, “Fasces | Anti-Defamation League”, \textit{ADL Hate Symbols Database}.\textsuperscript{171} ADL, “Fasces | Anti-Defamation League”, \textit{ADL Hate Symbols Database}.\textsuperscript{172} FRONTLINE PBS, “Documenting Hate: Charlottesville (Full Film) | FRONTLINE,” \textit{FRONTLINE PBS}, video, 2:46-2:50.\textsuperscript{173} ADL, “Runic Writing (Racist) | Anti-Defamation League”, \textit{ADL Hate Symbols Database}. Accessed 20 February 2022. \url{https://www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols/runic-writing-racist}\textsuperscript{174} ADL, “Othala Rune | Anti-Defamation League”, \textit{ADL Hate Symbols Database}. Accessed 20 February 2022. \url{https://www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols/othala-rune}\textsuperscript{175} This specific runic symbol also goes by this phrase, due to the heavily adoption of the symbol by Nazi German SS members, wherein the symbol was often worn on uniforms to distinguish themselves.\textsuperscript{176} ADL, “Runic Writing (Racist) | Anti-Defamation League”, \textit{ADL Hate Symbols Database}; ADL, “Othala Rune | Anti-Defamation League”, \textit{ADL Hate Symbols Database}, ADL, “Life Rune | Anti-Defamation League”, \textit{ADL Hate Symbols Database}. Accessed 20 February 2022. \url{https://www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols/life-rune}; and ADL, “SS Bolts | Anti-Defamation League”, \textit{ADL Hate Symbols Database}. Accessed 20 February 2022. \url{https://www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols/ss-bolts}.\textsuperscript{177} ADL, “Runic Writing (Racist) | Anti-Defamation League”, \textit{ADL Hate Symbols Database}.
It is important to emphasize that while there are clear and obvious appropriations of ancient Nordic symbols by the alt-right, ancient European symbols across the continent, often with pagan origins, are also appropriated. This is most clearly seen through the appropriation of the Celtic cross among white supremacists.\textsuperscript{178} Journalist AC Thompson exposed the use and meanings of hate symbols in tattoo form, and the Celtic cross has “one of the most widely utilized tattoos among white supremacists.”\textsuperscript{179}

Within the sea of Trump supporters, neo-Nazis, and alt-right militiamen like the “Proud Boys” and the “Oathkeepers,” one individual caught the attention of social media users and journalists alike. Jacob Angeli Chansley, dubbed the “QAnon Shaman,” made headlines for his face paint, horned furry headpiece, and use of a flagpole as a spear. Making a brief appearance within the \textit{New York Times} visual investigation on the Insurrection, Chansley was recorded in the Senate chamber, having written a note on then-Vice President Mike Pence’s stand: “it’s only a matter of time, justice is coming!”\textsuperscript{180} Chansley was not wearing a shirt during the Insurrection, \textbf{Figure 4a} depicts Chansley’s chosen costume, including red, white, and blue face paint, and a seeming faux-fur and horned hat. \textbf{Figure 4b} shows Chansley has tattooed on his chest both the Thorshammer and valknut, which are both directly associated with specific Nordic Gods.\textsuperscript{181} The Thorshammer is directly associated with the Nordic God Thor, the son of Odin.\textsuperscript{182} The valknut is

\textsuperscript{178} ADL, “Celtic Cross | Anti-Defamation League”, \textit{ADL Hate Symbols Database}. Accessed 20 February 2022. \url{https://www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols/celtic-cross}
\textsuperscript{179} FRONTLINE PBS, “Documenting Hate: Charlottesville (Full Film) | FRONTLINE,” \textit{FRONTLINE PBS}, video, 31:47-31:54.
\textsuperscript{182} ADL, “Thor’s Hammer”, \textit{ADL Hate Symbol Database}. Accessed 20 February 2022. \url{https://www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols/thors-hammer}
associated with the Nordic God Odin, and according to the ADL, the use of tattooing the valknut is considered by some to be a sign by those who are willing to give their life to Odin, typically in battle.\textsuperscript{183}

While ecofascists and right-wing nativists are not explicitly engaging in forms of nature worship or pagan traditions, there are clear divides amongst legitimate practitioners of European polytheisms, particularly those practicing Nordic polytheist tradition, or Asatru. According to Stefanie von Schnurbein, “from the outside, Asatru is time and time again equated across the board with neo-Nazis and volkisch-arisophic concepts.”\textsuperscript{184} The co-option of Nordic symbols and religious aesthetics by white supremacists and neo-Nazis, as per the author, often leads a-racist practitioners of Asatru to justify the need to dissociate from national socialism and racism.\textsuperscript{185} Symbols like the Thorshammer, the Irminsul, and the runes have been associated with these harmful propagandas.\textsuperscript{186} Furthermore, according to the author, “a number of white supremacist groups claim that their political agenda has to be realized through the belief in the “ancestral religion” of the “white race”, the “Aryan” or “Germanic peoples.” This forces Asatruers to distance themselves from overtly racist interpretations of their faith.”\textsuperscript{187} Von Schnurbein further analyzes divides within Asatru communities, particularly the divide between “folkish” and “universalist” practitioners. Whereas the universalists believe that anyone, regardless of race, who feels the desire to join the practice should do so, folkish sects of Asatru practice adhere to

\begin{thebibliography}{18}
\bibitem{183} ADL, “Valknot”, \textit{ADL Hate Symbol Database}. Accessed 20 February 2022. \url{https://www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols/valknot}
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more racist, rigid conditions of practice. More specifically, “folkish” sects of Asatru practice believe that their practice is a specific, ethnic religion, and only people of the same heritage should be allowed to practice this belief system.

While the ADL recognizes that plenty of Ancient European, or pagan symbols are used in the modern day in non-racist contexts, these symbols have also been appropriated by white supremacists, largely because of the ways in which Nazi Germany co-opted these images in their **symbology**. The ADL acknowledges that many non-racist contexts of use typically come from adherents of neo-pagan religions, and so “one should not simply assume that a particular use of certain symbols are racist, but should carefully judge it in its context.” It is also important to note that commercialization of Nordic or Germanic polytheism (sometimes equated with Viking culture) has breached the mainstream through media like the Marvel Cinematic Universe’s superhero films featuring Thor, who is a Nordic God turned superhero for planet Earth. However, it is clear from the usage of these symbols during major right-wing political mobilizations, that these symbols are not being utilized by non-racist, neopagan or polytheist practitioners. Rather, these symbols are being continuously co-opted as a means of white supremacists “playing native” against their deemed enemies.

**Conclusion**

There is a long documented, unsettling relationship between mainstream, western environmental movements, and white supremacy. Ecofascism is the byproduct of various social movements aimed at preserving systems of white, settler colonial superiority. Histories of

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188 ADL, “Runic Writing (Racist) | Anti-Defamation League,” ADL Hate Symbols Database.
189 ADL, “Sonnenrad,” ADL Hate Symbol Database.
environmentalism and nativism, alongside the role of eugenics and Malthusianism in both American and German institutions, have contributed to ecofascist discourse. More subtle forms of this rhetoric come from the *greening of hate*, wherein immigrants are scapegoated for environmental degradation. Within the last 60 years, there has been a distinct focus on regulating and controlling the reproductive agency of immigrant women within the United States and parts of Europe.

In the process of using environmentalism as a guise for xenophobia, proponents of right-wing environmentalism appropriate indigeneity, or “play native” at the expense of immigrants. While this neo-nativism is based on protecting white citizens' interests against foreign “invaders,” these sentiments are also based in notions of settler colonialism. These forms of identity appropriation not only impact immigrants as a form of neo-nativism, but also indigenous communities. Indigenous communities are intentionally left out of discourse, as a means of pushing white citizens of a country as “indigenous,” particularly in the United States, where our colonial histories with indigenous tribes are based in distinct European colonial ties. However, this narrative seems to be pushed outside of the USA as well, particularly in the case of ecofascist mass shooter Brenton Tarrant.

Extremists like Tarrant, as well as Patrick Crusius, an American domestic terrorist, push their xenophobic ideologies to broader audiences on the internet by constructing a white cultural identity under threat. Extremists like Tarrant and Crusius depict immigrants not only as invaders, but also as inherently criminal rapists, who dilute whiteness by violating white women’s bodies or via consensual interracial relationships. Finally, there is distinct appropriation of ancient European symbols to construct a common white European heritage, which may or may not hold significance for those who practice European polytheisms or pagan belief systems. This is clear
from extensive utilization of various Nordic symbols and images during large-scale, alt-right mobilizations, such as the 2017 “Unite the Right Rally” in Charlottesville, Virginia, or the 6 January 2021 Capitol Insurrection in Washington D.C. While sources like the ADL and SPLC note that these symbols and images are not inherently racist in application or use, due to the historical co-opting of pagan symbols, the context in which these symbols emerge make clear the users’ intentions. Ecofascist supporters and right-wing environmentalism “play native” at the expense of immigrants and indigenous communities, as a means of preserving systems of white supremacy and settler colonialism.
Figure 1a: Brenton Tarrant’s image collage at the end of his manifesto contains images with conflations of ethnic belonging to the natural landscape, with sonnenrads detailed within (87).
**Figure 1b:** From the Southern Poverty Law Center, Vanguard America-Texas uses this flag with a blue wheel, and a star in the middle of the sonnenrad’s wheel, representing the Texas state flag (from HateWatch Staff, “Flags and Other Symbols Used by Far-Right Groups in Charlottesville” *Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)*. Published 12 August 2017. Accessed 22 January 2022).

**Figure 1c:** Demonstrator in Charlottesville was captured with a red shield and sonnenrad designed on front (from FRONTLINE PBS, “Documenting Hate: Charlottesville (Full Film) | FRONTLINE,” *FRONTLINE PBS*, video, 8:02-8:08).
**Figure 2a:** Middle Right demonstrator adorned with Vanguard America symbols, different uses of the fasces. His shield displays the dual fasces, and his hat displays the eagle grasping the fasces (from VICE News, “Charlottesville: Race and Terror– VICE News Tonight on HBO,” VICE, video, 5:04-5:07).

**Figure 2b:** Members of Vanguard America with homemade shields, spray painted with eagles grasping fasces. They are dressed similarly to demonstrate collective power through uniform presence (from FRONTLINE PBS, “Documenting Hate: Charlottesville (Full Film) | FRONTLINE,” FRONTLINE PBS, video, 2:44-2:46)
Figure 3: Makeshift shield of Charlottesville demonstrator. His shield has red stripes, a fasces, as well as 2 (distinguishable) elder futhark runes. Symbol immediate left to fasces is unknown, but the “elk rune” and “sun rune” or “SS Bolt” are prominent on the shield (From FRONTLINE PBS, “Documenting Hate: Charlottesville (Full Film) | FRONTLINE,” FRONTLINE PBS, video, 2:46-2:50).

Figure 4b: Jacob Chansley within the halls of the Capitol building, during the insurrection on January 6, 2021. There are two distinct tattoos on his torso: first, towards his stomach area, is the Thorshammer, and the top tattoo (the triangular image) is the Valknot (from Jasmine Hilton. “‘QAnon Shaman’ Asks For Court Sentence Below Federal Guidelines Range; Prosecutors Seek the Max” News Article from The Washington Post, 10 November 2021. Accessed 22 February 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/legal-issues/jacob-chansley-court-sentence-below-range/2021/11/09/4a360130-41b5-11ec-a3aa-0255edc02eb7_story.html).
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